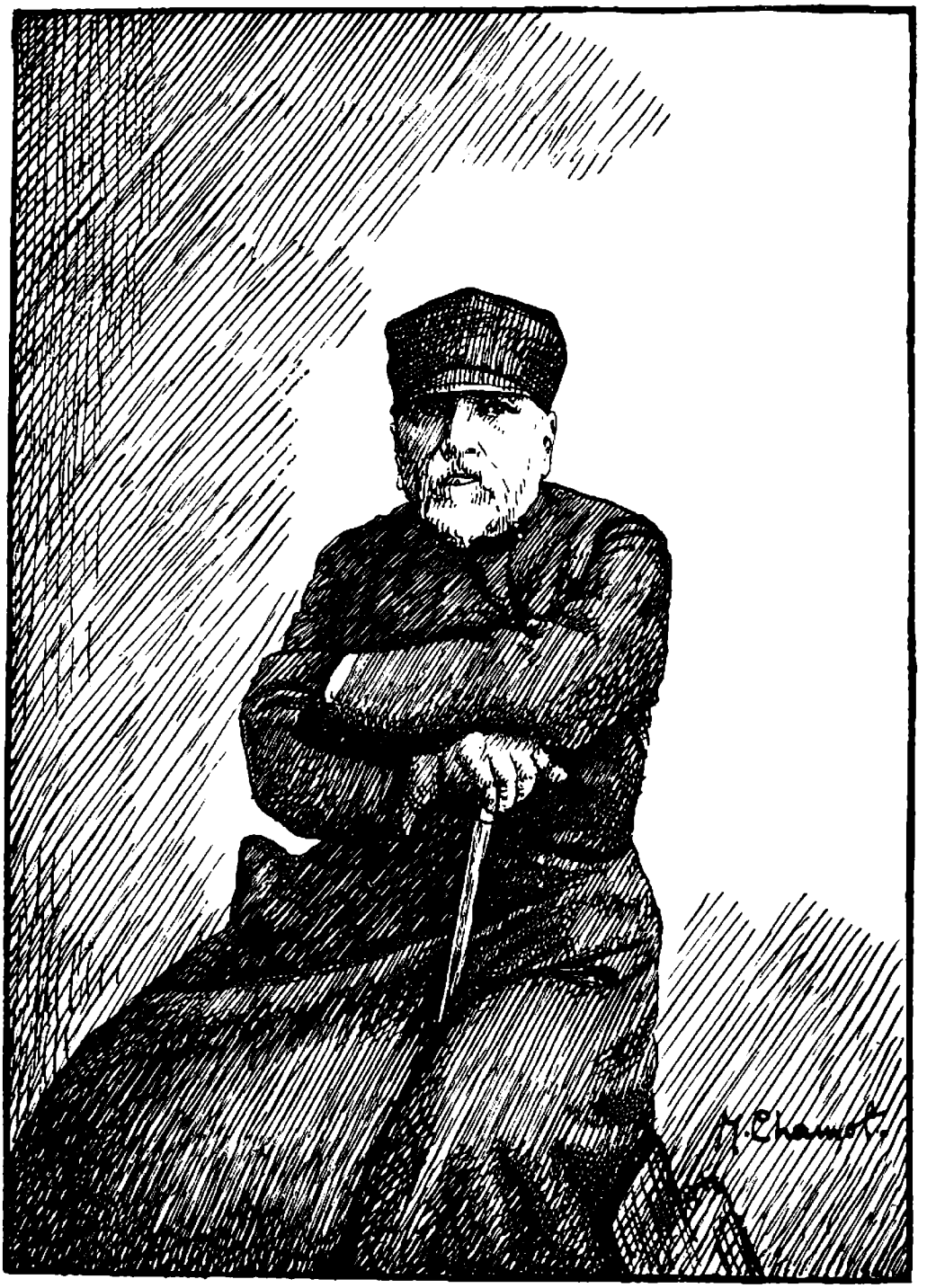
THE SENTRY
AND OTHER STORIES

NICOLAI LYESKOV





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THE SENTRY

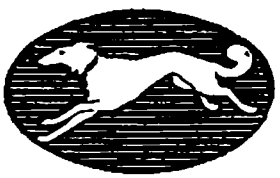
AND OTHER STORIES

BY NICOLAI LYESKOV

TRANSLATED BY A. E. CHAMOT

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

EDWARD GARNETT :: :: ::



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INTRODUCTION

At first sight it seems a little curious that this volume "The Sentry" should be the first translation from Lyeskov to appear in English. But one must recognize that even such a master as Aksakov (1791-1851) was only introduced to our public a few years back, and that it is really a matter of luck whether any but Russian authors of great celebrity get Englished at all. And Lyeskov, born 1831, a most original talent, moreover, flourished in the shade of unpopularity in his own country. Unfortunately for his fame Lyeskov sharply attacked the Nihilists of the sixties and seventies in two novels, "Nowhere to Go" and "At Daggers Drawn." And in retaliation he was cold-shouldered and sent to Coventry by indignant Young Russia, liberal or revolutionary. Thus after the publication of "Nowhere to Go," we find Pissarev wondering "if a single magazine will dare to print any other work by the same author, for to do so would mean the magazine losing its good name for ever." Lyeskov's name remained long under a cloud, and though

both Tolstoy and Tchehov commended his work it is only in recent years that it has been judged dispassionately by Russian critics. The critic, M. J. Olgin, in his interesting comments on Lyeskov,* quotes a typical attack, characteristically Russian in its *parti pris*, by A. T. Bogdanovitch :—

"A writer endowed with talent and observing power yet without a God in his soul. A cynic by constitution and a libertine by temperament, Lyeskov is a hypocrite screening himself with lofty words in the sanctity of which he does not believe," etc.

But fifteen years later this verdict is reversed by N. O. Lerner, who writes :—

"Lyeskov remains 'unplaced' in the history of Russian thought and Russian literature. The one thing that is definite and tangible about him is a bright and refined artistic feeling for life, and a pity for man. The title of one of his stories 'Vexation of Mind' may be used as a motto for all his creative work. All Lyeskov is in these words. His mind was vexed by a longing for truth and he knew how to stir souls, to arouse in them good feelings, and to lead them on the road to self-analysis and self-contemplation at the end of which all problems are solved."

Sementkovsky, Lyeskov's biographer, from whom we condense the information given below, makes it clear that it was Lyeskov's honesty and independence of mind that caused his work to be

*A Guide to Russian Literature. Cape, 1921.

denounced first by the Left and then by the Right! But let us hear Sementkovsky on Lyeskov's upbringing and outlook:—

"Nikolay Semyonovitch Lyeskov was born in 1831 in the province of Orel on his father's estate, where he spent his childhood and early youth. From ten to sixteen he was at school at Orel, but soon afterwards the Lyeskov family lost all their property, the father died of cholera, and at the age of eighteen Lyeskov had to take a job in Kiev, first in a government office, then as an agent of an Englishman, a certain Mr. Scott, who managed the enormous estates of the Counts Perovsky, and did a great deal to improve the conditions of the peasants. His work for Scott gave Lyeskov exceptional opportunities for studying Russian life; for ten years he travelled from one province to another and came into contact with 'all sorts and conditions of men.' As a young man he had no idea of becoming a writer, and the idea that he might write first occurred to him because the Scott family used to admire enormously the long letters he sent them and to read them to friends as if they were stories, and some of these friends encouraged him to write for publication. But the first things that Lyeskov wrote were wholly devoted to social and political questions, chiefly to matters affecting the welfare of the peasants. About 1860 Lyeskov came to Petersburg and lived there, for the most part, till his death in 1896.

"Lyeskov's parents were ordinary, well meaning people, fairly cultured (the father was a government official; the mother belonged to a noble family) and although he was a good son they had very little influence on him. The people who helped most to shape his character and convictions were his grandmother and his aunt—both of them very fine women—and the priest who gave him his first lessons in religion.

Both women were very religious, but the grandmother was firmly Orthodox and used to take little Lyeskov to holy places and monasteries, while the aunt was a Quaker, and it is interesting that throughout his life Lyeskov had equal sympathy with, and appreciation of, the mysticism and ritualism of the Church and the rationalistic faith of Evangelical Christians. The grandmother and the aunt were equally ready to help their neighbours and were always engaged in works of practical charity, and that, too, left a profound impression on Lyeskov, who held that *practical* love for others was the chief qualification of a good man. Lyeskov's religious feeling and his belief in the importance of Christian charity brought him very near Tolstoy, and at one time he took part in Tolstoy's publications for the peasants ('The Posrednix'), writing several beautiful legends of the early Christian times, the moral of the stories always being that the work most pleasing to God is to help our fellow men. But he differed from Tolstoy in this, that Lyeskov never idealised the primitive conditions of life, and so far from rejecting art, science, political institutions, etc., he thought that the way to make human life—especially Russian life—better, was to become *more* and not *less* civilised. Lyeskov attached great importance to all the practical measures that tended to make the peasants better educated, healthier, less inclined to get drunk, etc., and he enthusiastically welcomed the reforms of Alexander II.; but the exceptional opportunities he had had of studying Russian life at first hand convinced him that what matters most are not good laws or institutions in themselves, but the people who carry them out—and the people whom he met in Petersburg in the 'sixties' and who were going to make the 'new' Russia, disappointed him by their lack of practical sense and of knowledge of the real conditions of life. His first ground for quarrel with the 'Nihilists' was the *abstract* character of their theories—they seemed to him

to be out of contact with the real Russian life; and later on he found, too, that the 'advanced' theories attract a particularly objectionable type of people.

"Lyeskov's practical sense, independence of judgment and critical intelligence never allowed him to belong to any party. He could not accept any creed *en bloc*, and the result was that he was regarded with equal distrust both by the Left and the Right. The beginning of his unpopularity with the Left was, however, due to a misunderstanding . . . But eight years later the publication of his novel, 'Nowhere to Go' raised a storm of abuse against him . . . and Lyeskov was called a spy, an agent of the government, etc. But Lyeskov was not intimidated by this, nor embittered, and at the end of his life he met with exactly the same fate at the hands of the Conservatives. He held two posts, one in the Ministry of Public Instruction, and another in the Department of Crown Property, both of which he had to give up because he was too free and independent in his judgments. It was a hard thing for him to do because he had no means of livelihood except literature, which did not pay very well, but he never hesitated to sacrifice worldly advantage to his conscience. It was his stories dealing with Church subjects that made him powerful enemies, 'The Cathedral Folk,' 'The Stamped Angel,' 'On the Edge of the World,' etc. He was declared to be 'a secret, cunning and insinuating Nihilist'."

I confess that Lyeskov's fate at the hands of both the Parties and all the pure-souled Defenders of the rival political faiths, greatly delights one's sense of irony. For truth is infinite, and hued like a chameleon. Always behind one truth lurks another, and another, and then another complementary truth, often surprisingly disconcerting

to the spirit of the partizan. This is not to say that Lyeskov was not also "prejudiced" by his experiences. No doubt he generalized over freely about the Nihilists from the specimens he himself had encountered. Again it is declared that in both "At Daggers Drawn" and "The Cathedral Folk," Lyeskov unfairly exaggerated the traits of his unscrupulous characters, but who shall say if this were so, in the light of recent Russian history? An artist may divine elements in the life before his eyes, which only fully declare themselves at a later stage. Thus in "The Possessed" Dostoevsky divined the existence of monstrous personalities which more than a generation later emerged in full light in the hideous figure of Azev. And since Azev!

Anyway, in the stories here translated one does not encounter the spirit of the partizan. "The Sentry" is an excellent objective study of military manners under Tzar Nicholas I., and it reflects in a luminous glass the cast iron rigidity of the code dispensed by the martinets under the Autocrat's frown. Another and a blacker illustration of the abuse of despotic power to which the Russian seems specially prone, is seen in "The Toupee Artist," with its picture, admirable for its atmospheric veracity and dramatic strength, of the "paternal rule" of the Counts Kamensky in Orel. In "The

Lady Macbeth of the Mzinsk District," a fine example of searching sincerity, one is struck again by the impartial objectivity of the narrative. Lyeskov's qualities and his limitations are here broadly outlined. We have only to compare the portrait of Sergei with that of Naum in Turgenev's story "The Inn" to see how the great master surpasses the lesser in the expression of those delicate shades of feeling and manner in which the secret of personality, no less than the charm of style, resides. Apart from this, however, "The Lady Macbeth of the Mzinsk District" is a splendid example of psychological truth and breadth of vision, qualities in which the Russians always beat us hollow. Equally broad in its humanity is the last story "On the Edge of the World." Although the opening is too leisurely and some of the details are superfluous, how unforgettable is this picture of the worthy Russian bishop and his perplexities in his half-savage Siberian diocese. We are really, here, taken into the heart of ecclesiastical rule, with its unavailing struggle to reconcile the spirit of Christ's teaching with actual Christian practice. Good Father Kiriak's touchstone of conduct is simplicity itself. "Can I do this for the glory of Christ?" What a disconcerting test for Christendom which has "drenched the little Dove with blood." The

manner in which the Bishop is floored by the arguments and by the devotion of his heathen driver, is conclusive. The poor Bishop, at the close of the story, is almost as confused in mind as the Christianized savage, who ate the Holy Elements, the chrism, the sponge, carried off the pyx, and left Father Kiriak to freeze to death! But the Bishop at least is honest with us and frank with himself. He possessed that gift of the Russian nature—intellectual sincerity.

EDWARD GARNETT.

May, 1922.

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THE SENTRY
1839



I

THE events of the story which is now presented to the reader are so touching and terrible in their importance for the chief and heroic actor who took part in them, and the issue of the affair was so unique, that anything similar could scarcely have occurred in another country than Russia.

It forms in part a court anecdote, in part a historic event that characterizes fairly well the manners and the very strange tendencies of the uneventful period comprised in the third decade of this nineteenth century.

There is no invention in the following story.

II

DURING the winter of 1839, just before the Festival of the Epiphany, there was a great thaw in Petersburg. The weather was so warm, that it was almost like spring: the snow melted during the day, water dripped from the roofs, the ice on the rivers became blue, and open water appeared in many places. On the Neva, just in front of the Winter Palace, there was a large open space. A warm but very high wind blew from the west, the water was driven in from the gulf, and the signal guns were fired.

The guard at the Palace at that time was a company of the Ismailovsky regiment, commanded by a very brilliant well educated officer named Nikolai Ivanovich Miller, a young man of the very best society (who subsequently rose to the rank of general and became the director of the Lycium). He was a man of the so-called "humane tendencies," which had long since been noticed in him, and somewhat impaired his chances in the service, in the eyes of his superiors.

Miller was really an exact and trustworthy

officer; the duty of the guard at the Palace was without any danger; the time was most uneventful and tranquil; the Palace sentries were only required to stand accurately at their posts. Nevertheless, just when Captain Miller was in command, a most extraordinary and very alarming event took place, which is probably scarcely remembered even by the few of his contemporaries who are now ending their days upon earth.

III

AT first everything went well with the guard. The sentries were placed, the men were all at their posts and all was in the most perfect order. The Emperor Nikolai Pavlovich was well, he had been for a drive in the evening returned home, and had gone to bed. The Palace slept, too. The night was most quiet. There was tranquillity in the guard-room. Captain Miller had pinned his white pocket handkerchief to the back of the officer's chair, with its traditionally greasy morocco high back and had settled down to while away the time by reading.

Captain Miller had always been a passionate reader, and therefore was never dull; he read and did not notice how the night passed away. When suddenly at about three o'clock he was alarmed by a terrible anxiety. The sergeant on duty, pale and trembling with fear, stood before him, and stammered hurriedly:

"A calamity, your honour, a calamity!"

"What has happened?"

"A terrible misfortune has occurred."

Captain Miller jumped up in indescribable agitation and with difficulty was able to ascertain what really was the nature of the " calamity " and the " terrible misfortune."

IV

THE case was as follows: the sentry, a private of the Ismailovsky regiment named Postnikov, who was standing on guard at the outer door of the Palace, now called the "Jordan" entrance heard that a man was drowning in the open spaces which had appeared in the ice just opposite the Palace, and was calling for help in his despair.

Private Postnikov, a domestic serf of some great family, was a very nervous and sensitive man. For a long time he listened to the distant cries and groans of the drowning man, and they seemed to benumb him with horror. He looked on all sides, but on the whole visible expanse of the quays and the Neva, as if on purpose, not a living soul could he see.

There was nobody who could give help to the drowning man, and he was sure to sink . . .

All this time the man struggled long and terribly.

It seemed as if there was but one thing left for him—to sink to the bottom without further struggle, but no! His cries of exhaustion were

now broken and ceased, then were heard again, always nearer and nearer to the Palace quay. It was evident that the man had not lost his direction, but was making straight for the lights of the street lamps, but doubtless he would perish because just in his path, he would fall into the "Jordan" (a hole made in the ice of the river for the consecration of the water on the 6th of January.) There he would be drawn under the ice and it would be the end. Again he was quiet, but a minute later he began to splash through the water, and moan: "Save me, save me!" He was now so near that the splashing of the water could actually be heard as he waded along.

Private Postnikov began to realize that it would be quite easy to save this man. It was only necessary to run on to the ice, as the drowning man was sure to be there, throw him a rope, or stretch a pole or a gun towards him, and he would be saved. He was so near that he could take hold of it with his hand and save himself. But Postnikov remembered his service and his oath; he knew he was the sentry, and that the sentry dare not leave his sentry-box on any pretext or for any reason whatever.

On the other hand, Postnikov's heart was not at all submissive; it gnawed, it throbbed, it sank. He would have been glad to tear it out and throw

it at his feet—he had become so uneasy at the sound of these groans and sobs. It was terrible to hear another man perishing and not to stretch out a hand to save him, when really it was quite possible to do so, because the sentry-box would not run away, and no other harm could happen. "Shall I run down? Will anybody see it? Oh, Lord, if it could only end! He's groaning again!"

For a whole half hour, while this was going on, Private Postnikov's heart tormented him so much that he began to feel doubts of his own reason. He was a clever and conscientious soldier with a clear judgment, and he knew perfectly well, that for a sentry to leave his post was a crime that would have to be tried by court-martial, and he would afterwards have to run the gauntlet between two lines of cat-o'-nine-tails and then have penal servitude, or perhaps even be shot—but from the direction of the swollen river again there rose, always nearer and nearer, groans, mumblings and desperate struggles.

"I am drowning! Save me, I am drowning!"

Soon he would come to the Jordan cutting and then—the end.

Postnikov looked round once or twice on all sides. Not a soul was to be seen, only the lamps rattled, shook and flickered in the wind, and on

the wind were borne broken cries, perhaps the last cries . . . .

There was another splash, a single sob and a gurgling in the water.

The sentry could bear it no longer, and left his post.

V

POSTNIKOV rushed to the steps, with his heart beating violently, ran on to the ice, then into the water that had risen above it. He soon saw where the drowning man was struggling for life and held out the stock of his gun to him. The drowning man caught hold of the butt-end and Postnikov holding on to the bayonet drew him to the bank.

Both the man who had been saved, and his rescuer were completely wet; the man who had been saved was in a state of great exhaustion, shivered and fell; his rescuer Private Postnikov could not make up his mind to abandon him on the ice, but led him to the quay, and began looking about for somebody to whom he could confide him. While all this was happening, a sledge in which an officer was sitting had appeared on the quay. He was an officer of the Palace Invalid corps, a company which existed then, but has since been abolished.

This gentleman who arrived at such an inopportune moment for Postnikov was evidently

a man of a very heedless character, and besides a very muddled-headed and impudent person. He jumped out of his sledge and inquired:

"What man is this? Who are these people?"

"He was nearly drowned—he was sinking," began Postnikov.

"How was he drowning? Who was drowning? Was it you? Why is he here?"

But he only spluttered and panted, and Postnikov was no longer there; he had shouldered his gun and had gone back to his sentry-box.

Possibly the officer understood what had happened, for he made no further inquiries, but at once took the man who had been rescued into his sledge and drove with him to the Admiralty Police station in the Morskaia Street.

Here the officer made a statement to the inspector, that the dripping man he had brought had nearly been drowned in one of the holes in the ice in front of the Palace, and that he, the officer, had saved him at the risk of his own life.

The man who had been saved was still quite wet, shivering and exhausted. From fright and owing to his terrible efforts he fell into a sort of unconsciousness, and it was quite indifferent to him who had saved him.

The sleepy police orderly bustled around him, while in the office a statement was drawn up from

the officer's verbal deposition and, with the suspicion natural to members of the police, they were perplexed to understand how he had managed to come out of the water quite dry. The officer who was anxious to receive the life saving medal tried to explain this happy concurrence of circumstances, but his explanation was incoherent and improbable. They went to wake the police inspector, and sent to make inquiries.

Meantime in the Palace this occurrence was the cause of another rapid series of events.

VI

IN the Palace guard-room all that had occurred since the officer took the half drowned man into his sledge was unknown. There the Ismailovsky officer and the soldiers only knew that Postnikov, a private of their regiment, had left his sentry-box, and had hurried to save a man and, this being a great breach of military duty, Private Postnikov would certainly be tried by court-martial and have to undergo a thrashing, and all his superior officers, beginning from the commander of the company, would have to face terrible unpleasantness, to avert which they would have nothing to say, nor would they be able to defend themselves.

The wet and shivering soldier Postnikov, was of course at once relieved from his post, and when he was brought to the guard-room frankly related to Captain Miller all that we already know, with all the details to the moment when the officer of the Invalid Corps put the half drowned man into his sledge, and ordered the coachman to drive to the Admiralty police station.

The danger grew greater and more unavoidable. It was certain the officer of the Invalid Corps would relate everything to the police inspector and the inspector would at once state all the facts to the chief of police, Kokoshkin, who in the morning would make his report to the Emperor, and then the trouble would begin.

There was no time for reflection; the advice of the superior officer must be obtained.

Nikolai Ivanovich Miller forthwith sent an alarming note to his immediate superior, the commander of his battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Svinin, in which he begged him to come to the guard room as soon as he could to take every possible measure to help him out of the terrible misfortune that had occurred.

It was already about three o'clock, and Kokoshkin had to present his report to the Emperor fairly early in the morning, so that but little time remained for reflection and action.

VII

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL Svinin did not possess that compassion and tenderness of heart for which Nikolai Ivanovich Miller had always been distinguished. Svinin was not a heartless man, but first and foremost a martinet (a type that is now remembered with regret) Svinin was known for his severity and he even liked to boast of his exacting discipline. He had no taste for evil, and never tried to cause anybody useless suffering, but when a man had violated any of the duties of the service, Svinin was inexorable. In the present case he considered it out of place to enter into the consideration of the causes, that had guided the actions of the culprit, and held to the rule that every deviation from discipline was guilt. Therefore, in the company on guard all knew that Private Postnikov would have to suffer, what he deserved, for having left his post, and that Svinin would remain absolutely indifferent.

Such was the character by which the staff officer was known to his superiors, and also to his com-

rades, amongst whom there were men who did not sympathize with Svinin, because at that time "humaneness," and other similar delusions, had not entirely died out. Svinin was indifferent to whether he would be blamed or praised by the "humanitarians." To beg or entreat Svinin, or even to try to move him to pity was quite useless. To all this he was hardened with the well-tempered armour of the people of those times, who wanted to make their way in the world but even he, like Achilles, had a weak spot.

Svinin's career in the service had commenced well, and he of course greatly valued it and was very careful that on it, as on a full dress uniform, not a grain of dust should settle, and now this unfortunate action of one of the men of the battalion entrusted to him would certainly throw a shadow on the discipline of the whole company. Those on whom Svinin's well started and carefully maintained military career depended would not stop to inquire if the commander of the battalion was guilty or not guilty of what one of his men had done, while moved by the most honourable feelings of sympathy, and many would gladly have put a spoke in his wheel, so as to make way for their relations or to push forward some fine young fellow with high patronage. If the Emperor, who would certainly be angry, said to the commander of the

regiment that he had feeble officers, that their men were undisciplined: who was the cause of it? Svinin. So it would be repeated that Svinin was feeble, and the reproach of feebleness would remain a stain on his reputation that could not be washed out. Then he would never be in any way remarkable among his contemporaries, and he would not leave his portrait in the gallery of historical personages of the Russian Empire.

Although at that time but few cultivated the study of history, nevertheless they believed in it, and aspired, with special pleasure, to take part in its making.

VIII

AT about three o'clock in the morning, as soon as Svinin received Captain Miller's disquieting letter, he at once jumped out of bed, put on his uniform, and swayed by fear and anger arrived at the guard-room of the Winter Palace. Here he forthwith examined Private Postnikov, and assured himself that the extraordinary event had really taken place. Private Postnikov again frankly confirmed to the commander of his battalion all that had occurred while he was on guard duty, and what he (Postnikov) had already related to the commander of his company, Captain Miller. The soldier said, that he was guilty before God and the Emperor, and could not expect mercy; that he, standing on guard, hearing the groans of a man, who was drowning in the open places of the ice, had suffered long, had struggled long between his sense of military duty and his feelings of compassion, and at last he had yielded to temptation and not being able to stand the struggle, had left his sentry-box, jumped on the ice and had drawn the drowning man to the bank, and there to his

misfortune he met an officer of the Palace Invalid Corps.

Lieutenant-Colonel Svinin was in despair; he gave himself the only possible satisfaction by wreaking his anger on Postnikov, whom he at once sent under arrest to the regimental prison, and then said some biting words to Miller, reproaching him with "humanitarianism," which was of no use at all in military service; but all this was of no avail, nor would it improve the matter. It was impossible to find any excuse, still less justification, for a sentry who had left his post, and there remained only one way of getting out of the difficulty—to conceal the whole affair from the Emperor. . . .

But was it possible to conceal such an occurrence?

It was evident that this appeared to be impossible, as the rescue of the drowning man was known, not only to the whole of the guard, but also to that hateful officer of the Invalid Corps, who by now had certainly had time to report the whole matter to General Kokoshkin.

Which way was he to turn? To whom could he address himself? From whom could he obtain help and protection?

Svinin wanted to gallop off to the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovich and relate to him, quite frankly, all that had happened. Manœuvres of this nature

were then customary. The Grand Duke, who had a hot temper, would be angry and storm, but his humour and habits were such, that the greater the harshness he showed at first, even when he grievously insulted the offender, the sooner he would forgive him and himself take up his defence. Similar cases were not infrequent, and they were even sometimes sought after. Words do not hurt; and Svinin was very anxious to bring the matter to a favourable conclusion; but was it possible at night to obtain entrance to the palace and disturb the Grand Duke? To wait for morning and appear before Michael Pavlovich, after Kokoshkin had made his report to the Emperor, would be too late.

While Svinin was agitated by these difficulties he became more subtle, and his mind began to see another issue, which till then had been hidden as in a mist.

IX

AMONG other well-known military tactics there is the following: at the moment when the greatest danger is threatened from the walls of a beleagured fortress, not to retire, but to advance straight under its walls. Svinin decided not to do any of the things that had at first occurred to him, but to go straight to Kokoshkin.

Many terrible things were related at that time in Petersburg about the chief of police Kokoshkin, and many absurd things too, but among others it was affirmed that he possessed such wonderful resource and tact, that with the assistance of this tact he was not only able to make a mountain out of a molehill but that he was able as easily to make a molehill out of a mountain.

Kokoshkin was really very stern and very terrible, and inspired great fear in all who came in contact with him, but he sometimes showed mercy to the gay young scamps among the officers, and such young scamps were not few in those days, and they had often found in him a merciful and zealous

protector. In a word, he was able to do much, and knew how to do it, if he only chose. Both Svinin and Captain Miller knew this side of his character. Miller therefore encouraged his superior officer to risk going to Kokoshkin, and trust to the general's magnanimity and resource and tact, which would probably suggest to him the means of getting out of this unpleasant situation, without incurring the anger of the Emperor, which Kokoshkin, to his honour be it said, always made great efforts to avoid.

Svinin put on his overcoat, looked up to heaven, murmured several times, "Good Lord! Good Lord!" and drove off to Kokoshkin.

It was already past four o'clock in the morning.

X

THE chief of police Kokoshkin was aroused, and the arrival of Svinin, who had come on important business, that could not be postponed, was reported to him.

The general got up at once and, with an overcoat wrapped round him, wiping his forehead, yawning and stretching himself, came out to receive Svinin. Kokoshkin listened with great attention, but quite calmly, to all Svinin had to relate. During all these explanations and requests for indulgence he only said :

" The soldier left his sentry-box, and saved a man ? "

" Yes, sir," answered Svinin.

" And the sentry-box ? "

" Remained empty during that time."

" H'm ! I knew that it remained empty. I'm very pleased that nobody stole it."

Hearing this Svinin felt certain that the general knew all about the case, and that he had already decided in what manner he would place the facts before the Emperor in his morning's report, and

also that he would not alter this decision. Otherwise such an event as a soldier of the Palace Guard having left his post would without doubt have caused greater alarm to the energetic chief of police.

But Kokoshkin did not know anything about it. The police inspector to whom the officer of the Invalid Corps had conveyed the man saved from drowning did not consider it a matter of great importance. In his sight it was not at all a subject that required him to awaken the weary chief of police in the middle of the night, and besides the whole event appeared to the inspector somewhat suspicious, because the officer of the Invalids' was quite dry, which certainly could not have been the case if he had saved a man from drowning at the risk of his own life. The inspector looked upon the officer as an ambitious liar, who wanted to obtain another medal for his breast, and therefore detained him while the clerk on duty was taking down his statement, and tried to arrive at the truth by asking about all sorts of minute details.

It was disagreeable for the inspector that such an event should have occurred in his district, and that the man had been saved, not by a policeman but by an officer of the Palace Guard.

Kokoshkin's calmness could be explained very

simply: first, by his terrible fatigue, after a day of anxiety and hard work, and by his having assisted in the night at the extinguishing of two fires, and secondly because the act of the sentry Postnikor did not concern him, as Chief of Police, at all.

Nevertheless, Kokoshkin at once gave the necessary instructions.

He sent to the Inspector of the Admiralty Quarter and ordered him to come at once and bring the officer of the Invalid Corps and the man who had been saved with him, and asked Svinin to remain in the small waiting room adjoining his office. Then Kokoshkin went into his study, without closing the door, sat down at the table, and began to sign various papers, but he soon rested his head on his hand and fell asleep in his arm-chair at the table.

XI

IN those days there were neither municipal telegraphs nor telephones, and in order to transmit the commands of the chiefs the "forty thousand couriers" of whom Gogol has left a lasting memory in his comedy had to ride post haste in all directions.

This of course was not so quickly done as by telegraph or telephone, but lent considerable animation to the town and proved that the authorities were indefatigably vigilant.

Before the breathless inspector, the life-saving officer, and the man rescued from drowning had time to come from the Admiralty police station the nervous and energetic General Kokoshkin had had time to have a snooze and refresh himself. This was seen in the expression of his face, and by the revival of his mental faculties.

Kokoshkin ordered all who had arrived to come to his study and with them Svinin too.

"The official report?" the General demanded of the Inspector.

The latter silently handed a folded paper to the General and then whispered in a low voice:

"I must beg permission to communicate a few words to your Excellency in private."

"Very well."

Kokoshkin went towards the bay-window followed by the Inspector.

"What is it?"

The Inspector's indistinct whispers could be heard, and the General's loud interjections.

"H'm, yes! Well, what then? . . . . It is possible. . . . . They take care to come out dry. . . . . Anything more?"

"Nothing, sir."

The General came out of the bay-window, sat down at his desk, and began to read. He read the report in silence without showing any signs of uneasiness or suspicion, and then turning to the man who had been saved, asked in a loud voice:

"How comes it, my friend, that you got into the open places before the Palace?"

"Forgive me!"

"So! You were drunk?"

"Excuse me, I was not drunk, but only tipsy."

"Why did you get into the water?"

"I wanted to cut across the ice, lost my way, and got into the water."

"That means it was dark before your eyes."

"It was dark; it was dark all round, your Excellency."

"And you were not able to notice who pulled you out?"

"Pardon me, I could not notice anything. I think it was he"—he pointed to the officer and added: "I could not distinguish anything. I was so scared."

"That's what it comes to. You were loafing about when you ought to have been asleep. Now look at him well and remember who was your benefactor. An honourable man risked his life to save you."

"I shall never forget it."

"Your name, sir?"

The officer mentioned his name.

"Do you hear?"

"I hear, your Excellency."

"You are Orthodox?"

"I am Orthodox, your Excellency."

"In your prayers for health, remember this man's name."

"I will write it down, your Excellency."

"Pray to God for him, and go away. You are no longer wanted."

He bowed to the ground and cleared off immeasurably pleased that he was released.

Svinin stood there, and could not understand how by God's grace things were taking such a turn.

XII

KOKOSHKIN turned to the officer of the Invalid Corps.

"You saved this man, at the risk of your own life?"

"Yes, your Excellency."

"There were no witnesses to this occurrence, and owing to the late hour there could not have been any?"

"Yes, your Excellency, it was dark, and on the quay there was nobody except the sentry."

"There is no need to mention the sentry; the sentry has to stand at his post and has no right to occupy himself with anything else. I believe what is written in this report. Was it not taken down from your words?"

These words Kokoshkin pronounced with special emphasis, as if he were threatening or shouting.

The officer did not falter, but with staring eyes and expanded chest, standing at attention, answered:

"From my words and quite correctly, your Excellency."

" Your action deserves a reward."

The officer bowed gratefully.

" There is nothing to thank for," continued Kokoshkin. " I shall report your self-sacrificing act to His Majesty the Emperor, and your breast may be decorated with a medal even to-day. Now you may go home, have a warm drink, and don't leave the house, as perhaps you may be wanted."

The officer of the Invalid Corps beamed all over, bowed and retired.

Kokoshkin looking after him said :

" It is possible that the Emperor may wish to see him."

" I understand," answered the Inspector, with apprehension.

" I do not require you any more."

The Inspector left the room, closed the door, and in accordance with his religious habit crossed himself.

The officer of the Invalids' was waiting for the Inspector below, and they went away together much better friends than when they had come.

Only Svinin remained in the study of the Chief of Police. Kokoshkin looked at him long and attentively, and then asked :

" You have not been to the Grand Duke ? "

At that time when the Grand Duke was men-

tioned everybody knew that it referred to the Grand Duke Michael.

"I came straight to you," answered Svinin.

"Who was the officer on guard?"

"Captain Miller."

Kokoshkin again looked at Svinin and said:

"I think you told me something different before."

Svinin did not understand to what this could refer, and remained silent, and Kokoshkin added:

"Well, it's all the same; good night."

The audience was over.

XIII

ABOUT one o'clock the officer of the Invalids, was really sent for by Kokoshkin, who informed him most amiably the Emperor was very much pleased that among the officers of the Invalids' Corps of his palace there were to be found such vigilant and self-sacrificing men, and had honoured him with the medal for saving life. Then Kokoshkin decorated the hero with his own hands, and the officer went away to swagger about town with the medal on his breast.

This affair could therefore be considered as quite finished, but Lieutenant-Colonel Svinin felt it was not concluded and regarded himself as called upon to put the dots on the "i's."

He had been so much alarmed that he was ill for three days, and on the fourth drove to the Peter House, had a service of thanksgiving said for him before the icon of the Saviour, and returning home reassured in his soul, sent to ask Captain Miller to come to him.

"Well, thank God, Nikolai Ivanovich," he said to Miller, "the storm that was hanging over

us has entirely passed away, and our unfortunate affair with the sentry has been quite settled. I think we can now breathe freely. All this we owe without doubt first to the mercy of God, and secondly to General Kokoshkin. Let people say he is not kind and heartless, but I am full of gratitude for his magnanimity and respect for his resourcefulness and tact. In what a masterly way he took advantage of that vainglorious Invalid swindler, who, in truth, for his impudence ought to have received not a medal but a good thrashing in the stable. There was nothing else for him to do; he had to take advantage of this to save many, and Kokoshkin manœuvred the whole affair so cleverly that nobody had the slightest unpleasantness; on the contrary, all are very happy and contented. Between ourselves, I can tell you, I have been informed by a reliable person that Kokoshkin is very satisfied with me. He was pleased I had not gone anywhere else, but came straight to him, and that I did not argue with this swindler, who received a medal. In a word, nobody has suffered, and all has been done with so much tact that there can be no fear for the future; but there is one thing wanting on our side. We must follow Kokoshkin's example and finish the affair with tact on our side, so as to guarantee ourselves from any future occurrences.

There is still one person whose position is not regulated. I speak of Private Postnikov. He is still lying in prison under arrest, no doubt troubled with the thoughts of what will be done to him. We must put an end to his torments."

"Yes, it is time," said Miller, delighted.

"Well, certainly, and you are the best man to do it. Please go at once to the barracks call your company together, lead Private Postnikov out of prison, and let him be punished with two hundred lashes before the whole company."

XIV

MILLER was astonished, and made an attempt to persuade Svinin to complete the general happiness by showing mercy to Private Postnikov, and to pardon him as he had already suffered so much while lying in prison awaiting his fate, but Svinin only got angry and did not allow Miller to continue.

"No," he broke in, "none of that! I have only just talked to you about tact and you at once are tactless! None of that!"

Svinin changed his tone to a dryer, more official one, and added sternly:

"And as in this affair you too are not quite in the right, but really much to blame because your softness of heart is quite unsuitable for a military man, and this deficiency of your character is reflected in your subordinates, therefore you are to be present personally at the execution of my orders and to see that the flogging is done seriously—as severely as possible. For this purpose have the goodness to give orders that the young soldiers who have just arrived from the

army shall do the whipping, because our old soldiers are all infected with the liberalism of the guards. They won't whip a comrade properly, but would only frighten the fleas away from his back. I myself will look in to see that they have done the guilty man properly."

To evade in any way instructions given by a superior officer was of course impossible, and kind-hearted Captain Miller was obliged to execute with exactitude the orders received from the commander of his battalion.

The company was drawn up in the court-yard of the Ismailovsky barracks; the rods were fetched in sufficient quantities from the stores, and Private Postnikov was brought out of his prison and "done properly" at the hands of the zealous comrades, who had just arrived from the army. These men, who had not as yet been tainted by the liberalism of the guards, put all the dots on the i's to the full, as ordered by the commander of the battalion. Then Postnikov, having received his punishment, was lifted up on the overcoat on which he had been whipped and carried to the hospital of the regiment.

XV

THE commander of the battalion, Svinin, as soon as he heard that the punishment had been inflicted, went at once to visit Postnikov in the hospital in a most fatherly way, and to satisfy himself by a personal examination that his orders had been properly executed. Heart-sore and nervous, Postnikov had been "done properly." Svinin was satisfied and ordered that Postnikov should receive, on his behalf, a pound of sugar and a quarter of a pound of tea with which to regale himself while he was recovering. Postnikov from his bed heard this order about tea and said:

"I am very contented your honour. Thank you for your fatherly kindness."

And he really was contented, because while lying three days in prison he had expected something much worse. Two hundred lashes, according to the strict ideas of those days, was of very little consequence in comparison with the punishments that people suffered by order of the military courts; and that is the sort of punishment he

would have had awarded him if, by good luck, all the bold and tactful evolutions, which are related above, had not taken place.

But the number of persons who were pleased at the events just described was not limited to these.

XVI

THE story of the exploit of Private Postnikov was secretly whispered in various circles of society in the capital, which in those days, when the public Press had no voice, lived in a world of endless gossip. In these verbal transmissions the name of the real hero, Private Postnikov, was lost, but instead of that the episode became embellished and received a very interesting and romantic character.

It was related that an extraordinary swimmer had swum from the side of the Peter and Paul Fortress, and had been fired at and wounded by one of the sentries stationed before the Winter Palace and an officer of the Invalid Guard, who was passing at the time, threw himself into the water and saved him from drowning, for which the one had received the merited reward, and the other the punishment he deserved. These absurd reports even reached the Conventual House, inhabited at that time by His Eminence, a high ecclesiastic, who was cautious but not indifferent to worldly matters, and who was benevolently

disposed towards and a well-wisher of the pious Moscow family Svinin.

The story of the shot seemed improbable to the astute ecclesiastic. What nocturnal swimmer could it be? If he was an escaped prisoner, why was the sentry punished, for he had only done his duty in shooting at him, when he saw him swimming across the Neva from the fortress. If he was not a prisoner, but another mysterious man, who had to be saved from the waves of the Neva, how could the sentry know anything about him? And then again, it could not have happened as it was whispered in frivolous society. In society much is accepted in a light-hearted and frivolous manner, but those who live in monasteries and conventual houses look upon all this much more seriously and are quite conversant with the real things of this world.

XVII

ONCE when Svinin happened to be at His Eminence's to receive his blessing the distinguished dignitary began: "By the by, about that shot?" Svinin related the whole truth, in which there was nothing whatever "about that shot."

The high ecclesiastic listened to the real story in silence, gently touching his white rosary and never taking his eyes off the narrator. When Svinin had finished His Eminence quietly murmured in rippling speech:

"From all this one is obliged to conclude that in this matter the statements made were neither wholly nor on every occasion strictly true.

Svinin stammered and then answered with the excuse that it was not he but General Kokoshkin who had made the report.

His Eminence passed his rosary through his waxen fingers in silence, and then murmured:

"One must make a distinction between a lie and what is not wholly true."

Again the rosary, again silence, and at last a soft ripple of speech :

" A half truth is not a lie, but the less said about it the better.'"

Svinin was encouraged and said :

" That is certainly true. What troubles me most is that I had to inflict a punishment upon the soldier, who, although he had neglected his duty . . . ."

The rosary and a soft rippling interruption :

" The duties of service must never be neglected."

" Yes, but it was done by him through magnanimity, through sympathy after such a struggle, and with danger. He understood that in saving the life of another man he was destroying himself. This is a high, a holy feeling . . . ."

" Holiness is known to God ; corporal punishment is not destruction for a common man, nor is it contrary to the customs of the nations, nor to the spirit of the Scriptures. The rod is easier borne by the coarse body than delicate suffering by the soul. In this case your justice has not suffered in the slightest degree."

" But he was deprived of the reward for saving one who was perishing."

" To save those who are perishing is not a merit, but rather a duty. He who could save but did

not save is liable to the punishment of the laws; but he who saves does his duty."

A pause, the rosary, and soft rippling speech:

"For a warrior to suffer degradation and wounds for his action is perhaps much more profitable than marks of distinction. But what is most important is to be careful in this case, and never to mention anywhere or on any occasion what anybody said about it."

It was evident His Eminence was also satisfied.

XVIII

IF I had the temerity of the happy chosen of Heaven, who through their great faith are enabled to penetrate into the secrets of the Will of God, then I would perhaps dare to permit myself the supposition that probably God Himself was satisfied with the conduct of Postnikov's humble soul, which He had created. But my faith is small; it does not permit my mind to penetrate so high. I am of the earth, earthy. I think of those mortals who love goodness, simply because it is goodness and do not expect any reward for it, wherever it may be. I think these true and faithful people will also be entirely satisfied with this holy impulse of love, and not less holy endurance of the humble hero of my true and artless story.

THE LADY MACBETH OF THE MZINSK DISTRICT

I

IN our part of the country you sometimes meet people of whom, even many years after you have seen them, you are unable to think without a certain inward shudder. Such a character was the merchant's wife, Katerina Lvovna Izmaylova, who played the chief part in a terrible tragedy some time ago, and of whom the nobles of our district, adopting the light nickname somebody had given her, never spoke otherwise than as the Lady Macbeth of the Mzinsk District.

Katerina Lvovna was not really a beauty, but she was a woman of a very pleasing appearance. She was about twenty-four years of age ; not very tall, but slim, with a neck that was like chiseled marble ; she had soft round shoulders, firm breasts, a straight thin little nose, bright black eyes, a high white forehead, and black, almost blue black, hair. She came from Tuskar in the Kursk province and had married Izmaylov, a merchant of our place, not because she loved him or from any attraction towards him, but simply because he

courted her, and she, being a poor girl, was not able to be too particular in making her choice of a husband. The firm of the Izmaylovs was one of the most considerable in our town; they dealt in wheaten flour, leased a large flour mill in the district, owned profitable fruit orchards not far from town, and in the town had a fine house. In a word, they were wealthy merchants. Their family was quite small. It consisted of her father-in-law, Boris Timofeich Izmaylov, a man of nearly eighty who had long been a widower; Zinovey Borisych Katerina Lvovna's husband, a man of over fifty; and Katerina Lvovna herself. Katerina Lvovna, who had now been married for five years, had no children. Zinovey Borisych had also no children from his first wife, with whom he had lived for twenty years before he became a widower and married Katerina Lvovna. He had thought and hoped that God would give him an heir by his second marriage to inherit his commercial name and fortune; but in this, too, he and Katerina Lvovna had no luck.

Not having children grieved Zinovey Borisych very much, and not only Zinovey Borisych, but also the old man Boris Timofeich, and it made even Katerina Lvovna herself very sad; first, because the immeasurable dullness of this secluded merchant's house, with its high fence and unchained

watch-dogs, often made her feel so very melancholy that she almost went mad, and she would have been pleased, God knows how pleased, to have had a child to nurse; and also because she was tired of hearing reproaches: Why did she get married? What was the use of getting married? Why was she, a barren woman, bound by fate to a man? Just as if she had indeed committed a crime against her husband, against her father-in-law, and their whole race of honest merchants.

Notwithstanding all the wealth and plenty that surrounded her in her father-in-law's house, Katerina Lvovna's life was a very dull one. She seldom went to visit anyone, and even when she drove with her husband to any of his merchant friends, it was no pleasure. The people were all strict: they watched how she sat down, how she walked across the room, how she got up. Now Katerina Lvovna had a passionate nature, and having been brought up in poverty she was accustomed to simplicity and freedom: running with pails to the river for water, bathing under the pier in a shift, or scattering sun-flower seeds over the gate on to the head of any young fellow who might be passing by. Here all was different. Her father-in-law and her husband got up early, drank tea at six o'clock, and then went out to their business, and she stayed behind, to roam about the

house from one room to another. Everywhere it was clean, everywhere it was quiet and empty; the lamps glimmered before the icons; but nowhere in the house could you hear the sound of life or a human voice.

Katerina Lvovna would wander about the empty rooms, and begin to yawn because she was dull. Then mounting the stairs to their conjugal chamber, which was in a high, small attic, she would sit down at the window and look at the men weighing hemp or filling sacks with flour—she would yawn again—she was glad to feel sleepy—she would then take a nap for an hour or two, and when she awoke—there was the same dullness, the Russian dullness, the dullness of a merchant's house, which they say makes it quite a pleasure to strangle oneself. Katerina Lvovna did not like reading and even had she liked it there were no books in the house except the Kiev Lives of the Fathers.

This was the dull life Katerina Lvovna had lived in the house of her rich father-in-law all the five years of her married life with her indifferent husband; but nobody, as usual, took the slightest notice of her loneliness.

II

IN the spring of the sixth year of Katerina Lvovna's married life the dam of the Izmaylov's mill burst. Just at that time, as if on purpose, much work had been brought to the mill, and the damages were very extensive. The water had washed away the lower beams of the mill-race, and it had been impossible to stop it in a hurry. Zinovey Borisych had collected workmen from the whole district at the mill, and himself remained there permanently. The town business was carried on by the old man, and Katerina Lvovna languished at home quite alone for days on end. At first she was even duller without her husband, but after a time it seemed to her better so; she was freer when alone. Her heart had never been very greatly drawn towards him, and without him at any rate there was one less to order her about.

One day Katerina Lvovna was sitting at the small window of her attic; she yawned thinking of nothing in particular, and at last became ashamed of yawning. The weather was beautiful—warm, light, gay—and through the green wooden palings

of the garden one could see the playful birds in the trees fluttering about from branch to branch.

"I wonder why I am yawning so," thought Katerina Lvovna. "Well, I might get up and walk about the yard, or go into the garden."

Katerina Lvovna threw an old cloth jacket over her shoulders and went out.

Out of doors it was light, and you could take deep long breaths, and in the shed near the warehouse such gay laughter was heard.

"Why are you so merry?" said Katerina Lvovna to her father-in-law's clerk.

"Little Mother, Katerina Lvovna, it's because they are weighing a live pig," answered the old clerk.

"What! A pig?"

"It is that pig Aksinia, who gave birth to a son, Vassili, and never invited us to the christening," answered a merry, bold young fellow. He had an impudent good-looking face, framed in curly coal-black locks, and a little beard that was only just beginning to grow.

At that moment the fat red face of the cook Aksinia looked out of the flour vat which was hanging to the beam of the weighing machine.

"You devils, you smooth faced imps!" the cook swore, trying to catch hold of the iron beam and get out of the swaying vat.

"She weighs eight pouds before dinner, but when she has eaten a pile of hay there wont be enough weights!" the good-looking young fellow continued, to explain, and turning the vat over he threw the cook out on some sacks that were heaped up in a corner.

The woman abusing them laughingly began to tidy herself.

"Well, and how much would I weigh?" said Katerina Lvovna jokingly, and taking hold of the rope got on to the weighing machine.

"Three pouds and seven pounds," answered the same good-looking Sergei, throwing the weights on to the machine. "Wonderful."

"What are you wondering at?"

"That you weigh three pouds, Katerina Lvovna. One would have to carry you all day long in one's arms, I reckon, before getting exhausted—it would only be a pleasure."

"What, am I not like other people, eh? If you carried me, never fear, you would get just as tired," answered Katerina Lvovna, blushing slightly. She was unused to such words, and she suddenly felt a desire to chatter and say all sorts of gay, jolly things.

"Certainly not! Good Lord! I would carry you to Arabia the Blessed," answered Sergei to her remark.

"Young man, you don't argue correctly," said the peasant who was filling the sacks. "What is of weight in us? Is it our body that weighs? Our body, my good fellow, counts for nothing on the scales: it's our strength, our strength, that weighs —not our body!"

"Yes, when I was a girl, I was terribly strong," said Katerina Lvovna, who was unable to restrain herself. "Not every man could get the better of me."

"Well, then, if that is so, give me your little hand," said the handsome young fellow.

Katerina Lvovna became confused, but held out her hand.

"Oh, let go of my ring, it hurts!" cried Katerina Lvovna, when Sergei squeezed her hand in his; and with her free hand she gave him a blow on the chest.

The young fellow released the mistress's hand and her blow made him stagger two paces backwards.

"So that's how you can judge a woman," said the surprised peasant.

"No, allow me to try to wrestle with you?" said Sergei, throwing back his curls.

"Very well, try," answered Katerina Lvovna gaily, and she lifted up her elbows.

Sergei put his arms round the young mistress, and pressed her firm breasts to his red shirt.

Katerina Lvovna could only make a slight movement of her shoulders, and Sergei lifted her from the floor, held her up in the air, pressed her to himself, and then gently set her down on the overturned vat.

Katerina Lvovna had no time even to attempt to make use of her boasted strength. She looked very red as she sat on the measure and arranged the jacket on her shoulders, and then quietly went out of the warehouse; while Sergei coughed vigorously and shouted:

"Now then, you blockheads! Don't stand and gape. Fill the sacks and give level measure; strict measure is our gain." Just as if he were paying no heed to what had just occurred.

"He's always after the girls, that damned Serezhka," said the cook Aksinia, as she waddled after Katerina Lvovna. "The rascal is attractive in every way—fine body, fine face, good looks. He will coax and flatter any woman you like—and then lead her to sin. He is a fickle scoundrel too—as fickle as you make 'em!"

"And you, Aksinia, what about you?" said the young mistress walking in front. "Is your boy still alive?"

"He's alive, little mother, he's alive. Why shouldn't he be? They always live where they're not wanted."

"Whose is he?"

"Eh, who's to know? One lives in a crowd—one walks about with many."

"Has that young fellow been long with us?"

"Which young fellow? Do you mean Sergei?"

"Yes."

"About a month. He served before at Konchonov's. The master kicked him out." Aksinia lowered her voice and continued: "They say he had a love affair with the mistress there. The cursed young scamp! See how bold he is!"

III

A WARM milky twilight hung over the town. Zinovey Borisych had not yet returned from the work at the dam. The father-in-law Boris Timofeich was not at home either; he had gone to the celebration of an old friend's name-day, and had said he would not be home for supper. Katerina Lvovna, having nothing to do, had retired early to her room, and opening the little window of her attic, sat leaning against the window-post, cracking sunflower seeds. The servants had finished their supper in the kitchen and had gone to bed, some in the barn, some in the warehouse, and others in the high sweet-scented hay loft. Sergei was the last to leave the kitchen. He walked about the yard, unchained the watch-dogs, and passed whistling under Katerina Lvovna's window. He looked up at her and bowed low.

"How do you do?" Katerina Lvovna said to him quietly from her attic, and the yard became silent as if it were a desert.

"Madam!" said somebody, five minutes later at Katerina Lvovna's locked door.

"Who's there?" asked Katerina Lvovna, frightened.

"Don't be afraid! It's I, Sergei," answered the clerk.

"Sergei? What do you want?"

"I have a little business with you, Katerina Lvovna; I want to ask your gracious self about a small matter. Allow me to come in for a moment."

Katerina Lvovna turned the key and let Sergei in.

"What do you want?" she said, going to the window.

"I have come to you, Katerina Lvovna, to ask if you have some book you could give me to read. It helps to drive away boredom."

"No, Sergei, I have no books. I do not read them," answered Katerina Lvovna.

"It's so dull!" Sergei complained.

"Why should you feel dull?"

"Good gracious, how can I help feeling dull? I'm a young man; we live here like in a monastery, and the only future to be seen is that we shall go on stagnating in this solitude till we are under the coffin-lid. It makes one sometimes despair."

"Why don't you get married?"

"It's easy, madam, to say get married. Whom can one marry here? I'm only an unimportant man. A master's daughter won't marry me, and owing to poverty, as you yourself know, Katerina

Lvovna, I have not much education. How could such a girl know anything about real love ? Surely you have noticed how rich merchants understand it. Now you, one may say, would be a comfort to any man who has any feelings. but they keep you in a cage like a canary-bird."

" Yes, I am dull, " exclaimed Katerina Lvovna involuntarily.

" How can one help being dull, madam, in such a life ? Even if you had another, as others have, it would be impossible to see him."

" Why, what do you mean ? It's not that at all. If only I had had a child, I think I should be merry with it."

" Yes, but allow me to say madam, even a child comes from somewhere and not out of the clouds. Do you think, that now having lived so many years with masters, and having seen the sort of life the women have among merchants, we also don't understand ? The song says : ' Without a dear friend, sadness and grief possess thee.' And this sadness, I must inform you, Katerina Lvovna, has made my heart feel so tender, that I could take a steel knife to cut it out of my breast and throw it at your little feet. It would be easier, a hundred times easier for me then . . . ."

Sergei's voice shook.

"Why are you telling me about your heart? I have nothing to do with it. Go away . . . ."

"No, allow me, madam," said Sergei, trembling all over and taking a step towards Katerina Lvovna. "I know, I see, I feel and understand quite well that your lot is no better than mine in this world; but now," said he, drawing a long breath, "now at this moment, all this is in your hands, and in your power."

"What do you mean?—Why have you come to me?—I shall throw myself out of the window," said Katerina Lvovna, feeling herself under the intolerable power of an indescribable terror, and she caught hold of the window sill.

"My life! My incomparable one, why should you throw yourself out of the window?" whispered Sergei boldly, and tearing the young mistress away from the window he pressed her in a close embrace.

"Oh, oh, let me go," Katerina Lvovna sighed gently, becoming weak under Sergei's hot kisses, and she pressed, contrary to her own wish, closer to his strong body.

Sergei lifted the mistress up in his arms like a child and carried her to a dark corner.

A silence fell upon the room, which was only broken by the soft regular ticking of a watch, belonging to Katerina Lvovna's husband, which

hung over the head of the bed; but this did not disturb them.

"Go," said Katerina Lvovna half an hour later, without looking at Sergei, as she arranged her disordered hair before a small mirror.

"Why should I go away from here now," answered Sergei in a joyful voice.

"My father-in-law will lock the door."

"Eh, my dear, my dear! What sort of people have you known, that you think the only road to a woman is through a door? To come to you, or to go from you there are doors everywhere for me," said the young fellow, pointing to the columns that supported the gallery.

IV

FOR more than a week Zinovey Borisych did not return, and the whole time his wife spent every night, till the white dawn, with Sergei.

In those nights much happened in Zinovey Borisych's bedroom: wine from the father-in-law's cellar was drunk; dainty sweetmeats eaten; many kisses taken from the mistress's sugared lips, and black locks toyed with on the soft pillows. But not every road is smooth: some have ruts.

Boris Timofeich could not sleep. The old man in his coloured print shirt wandered about the quiet house; he went up to one window, went up to another, looked out, and saw Sergei in a red shirt quietly sliding down the column from his daughter-in-law's window. "What's this?"

Boris Timofeich hurried out and caught the young fellow by the leg. Sergei turned round wanting to give him a box on the ear, with his whole strength, but stopped, remembering the noise it would make.

"Tell me where you have been, you young thief?" said Boris Timofeich.

"Wherever it was, Boris Timofeich," said Sergei, "I am no longer there."

"Have you spent the night with my daughter-in-law?"

"Well, as to that, master, I know where I have passed the night; but, Boris Timofeich, listen to my words; what is done can't be undone, father. Don't disgrace your merchant's house by taking extreme measures. Tell me what you require of me now? What amends do you want?"

"You asp, I want to give you five hundred lashes," answered Boris Timofeich.

"As you will—it's my fault," agreed the young man. "Tell me where to go; do as you please—you may drink my blood."

Boris Timofeich took Sergei to his little stone store-room, and lashed him with his whip until he had no more strength. Sergei did not utter a groan, but instead he chewed half his shirt sleeve away.

Boris Timofeich left Sergei in the store-room for the bruises on his back to heal, gave him an earthen jug of water, locked the door with a great padlock, and sent for his son.

In Russia even now you can't drive fast over by-ways, and Katerina Lvovna could not live a single hour without Sergei. Her awakened

nature had suddenly developed to its full breadth, and she had become so resolute that it was impossible to restrain her. She found out where Sergei was, talked with him through the iron door, and hurried away to look for the keys. "Daddy, let Sergei out," said she coming to her father-in-law.

The old man turned green. He had never expected such brazen-faced insolence from his erring daughter-in-law, who till then had always been obedient

"What do you mean, you ——" and he began to revile Katerina Lvovna.

"Let him out," said she. "I can answer with a clear conscience that as yet nothing wrong has passed between us."

"No wrong has happened," said he, "and there he is grinding his teeth. What did you do with him at night there? Did you restuff your husband's pillows?"

But she only repeated the same words: "Let him out, let him out."

"If that is so," said Boris Timofeich, "this is what you shall have for reward: Your husband shall come, and we will take you, you honest wife, to the stable, and whip you with our own hands, and to-morrow that rascal shall be sent to prison."

This is what Boris Timofeich decided. His decision, however, was not carried out.

V

BORIS TIMOFEICH ate mushrooms with gruel for supper; he got a heart-burn from it. Then suddenly he had pains in the pit of the stomach, terrible vomitings began and he died before morning. He died just like the rats in his granary, for which Katerina Lvovna had always prepared, with her own hands, a certain kind of food made of a dangerous white powder that had been entrusted to her.

Katerina Lvovna let Sergei out of the old man's store-room and brazenly laid him publicly in her husband's bed to recover from the blows that her father-in-law had inflicted on him. Her father-in-law was buried according to the rites of the Christian Church. Nobody was surprised at this strange occurrence. Boris Timofeich was dead, and had died after eating mushrooms, as many die after eating them. Boris Timofeich was buried hurriedly without waiting for his son to arrive; it was very hot weather, and the messenger who had been sent to him did not find Zinovey Borisych at the mill. He had heard of a forest that was for

sale a hundred versts farther off, and had gone there to inspect it, without telling anybody which road he had taken.

Having settled this business Katerina Lvovna became quite changed. She had never been one of your timid women, but now you could not guess what she would do next. She went about like an empress, gave orders to everybody, and did not let Sergei leave her for a moment. The people in the yard were surprised at this; but Katerina Lvovna managed to reach all of them with her bountiful hand, and their surprise suddenly ceased. They understood that the mistress had some sort of business with Sergei—"that's all. It's her affair—she will have to answer for it."

By this time Sergei had recovered; he grew straight again and became again the same smart young fellow, like a live falcon at Katerina Lvovna's side, and their life of love making recommenced! But it was not only for them that time passed; the injured husband was hastening home after his long absence.

VI

IN the afternoon the heat was baking and the nimble flies were unbearably irritating. Katerina Lvovna had closed the shutters of the bedroom window, hung a woollen shawl across it, and had laid herself down with Sergei to rest on the merchant's high bed. Katerina Lvovna was scarcely asleep, but oppressed by the heat, her face was wet with perspiration and her breath came hot and heavy. She felt it was time to wake up, that it was time to go into the garden to have tea, but she could not move. At last the cook knocked at the door and announced that the samovar was getting cold under the apple tree. Katerina Lvovna with scarcely opened eyes began to caress the cat. The cat squeezed itself in between Sergei and her. It was such a fine grey cat, large and fat, with whiskers like a tax-collector's. Katerina Lvovna began to stroke his thick fur. He stretched out his head to her, thrust his blunt nose coaxingly against her firm breasts and began to sing a soft song, as if he were telling her of love. "I wonder why this cat has come

here ?" thought Katerina Lvovna. "I put some cream on the window sill; I am sure the rascal has lapped it up. I must turn him out," she decided and wanted to seize hold of him and put him out of the room, but he seemed to slip away between her fingers like a mist. "How has this cat come here ?" Katerina Lvovna thought in her dream. "We have never had a cat in our bedroom and now see what a fine one has got in." She again tried to catch the cat, but again it was not there. "What can it be ? I wonder if it is a cat at all ?" thought Katerina Lvovna. A panic seized her and drove both her dream and her sleep quite away. Katerina Lvovna looked round the room; there was no cat anywhere, only handsome Sergei lying there and with his strong hand pressing her breast to his hot face.

Katerina Lvovna rose, sat down on the bed, kissed and caressed Sergei many times, arranged the disordered feather bed, and went into the garden to drink tea. The sun was already low, and a beautiful, enchanting evening was settling down on the hot earth.

"I have slept too long," said Katerina Lvovna to Aksinia as she sat down on a carpet under the flowering apple tree to drink tea. "What does this mean, Aksinia ?" she asked the cook as she wiped a saucer with the tea-cloth.

"What, little mother?"

"It was not like a dream, but I saw quite clearly a cat creep up to me."

"Really!"

"It's quite true a cat crept up to me," and Katerina Lvovna related how the cat had crept up to her.

"Why did you fondle it?"

"That's just it. I don't know why I did."

"Wonderful, certainly!" exclaimed the cook.

"I can't help being astonished."

"It certainly seems as if somebody will come to you, don't you think, or as if something will happen?"

"At first I dreamed of the moon, and then of this cat," continued Katerina Lvovna.

"The moon, that means a baby."

Katerina Lvovna blushed.

"Should I not send Sergei to your honour?" said Aksinia trying to obtain confidences.

"Well, why not!" answered Katerina Lvovna, "that's a good idea. Go and send him to me, I will treat him to tea here."

"Well, well, just as I thought. I will send him," and Aksinia waddled off like a duck towards the garden gate.

Katerina Lvovna also told Sergei about the cat.

"Only dreams," answered Sergei.

"Why have these dreams never been before?"

"Many things have not been before. Formerly I could only look at you with my eyes and pine for you, and now behold! Your whole white body is mine."

Sergei caught Katerina Lvovna in his arms, swung her round in the air, and playfully threw her down on the thick carpet.

"Oh, I am quite giddy!" said Katerina Lvovna. "Serezha, come here and sit down next to me," she called to him tenderly as she stretched herself out luxuriously.

The young fellow bent down, got under the low branches of the apple tree, which were covered with white blossoms, and seated himself on the carpet at Katerina Lvovna's feet.

"So you pined for me, Serezha!"

"How could I not pine for you?"

"How did you pine for me? Tell me all about it."

"How can one explain it? Is it possible to explain how one pines away? I was melancholy!"

"Serezha, why did I not feel that you were dying for me? They say that can be felt."

Sergei remained silent.

"Why did you sing songs if you were longing for me? Why? I heard you, believe me, singing

under the shed." Katerina Lvovna continued to question, fondling him all the time.

"What if I did sing songs? The gnats sing their whole life, but not for joy," answered Sergei dryly.

There was a pause. Sergei's confessions filled Katerina Lvovna with great delight.

She wanted to talk, but Sergei frowned and was silent.

"Look, Sergei, what a paradise, a paradise," cried Katerina Lvovna gazing up through the thick branches of the flowering apple tree, into the blue sky where the full moon hung serenely.

The moonlight streaming through the leaves and flowers of the apple tree fell in the strangest bright spots on Katerina Lvovna's face and figure, as she lay on her back beneath it. The air was still; only a light warm breeze gently moved the sleepy leaves and brought with it the faint scent of flowering herbs and trees. It was difficult to breathe and one felt an inclination to laziness, indulgence, and dark desires.

Katerina Lvovna not receiving an answer was again silent, and continued to gaze at the sky through the pale pink blossoms of the apple tree. Sergei remained silent too, but he was not interested in the sky; clasping his knees with both arms he sat concentrating his gaze on his boots.

A golden night! Stillness, light, aroma and beneficent, vivifying warmth. On the other side of the garden, in the distance beyond the ravine, someone struck up a loud song; near the fence in a thicket of bird-cherries a nightingale poured forth its shrill song; in a cage on a high pole a sleepy quail jumped about; the fat horse breathed heavily behind the stable wall; and on the other side of the garden fence a pack of gay dogs ran noiselessly across the common and disappeared in the strange, formless, black shade of the old, half-ruined salt-warehouses.

Katerina Lvovna leaned on her elbow and looked at the high grass of the garden; the grass seemed to be playing with the moonbeams, that fell in small flickers on the leaves and blossoms of the trees.

All was gilded by these capricious bright spots that twinkled and trembled everywhere like fiery butterflies, as if the grass under the trees had been caught in a net of moonbeams and moved from side to side.

"Ah, Serezhechka, how beautiful," cried Katerina Lvovna, looking round.

Sergei looked round with indifference.

"Serezha, why are you so joyless? Are you already tired of my love?"

"Don't talk nonsense," answered Sergei shortly, and bending down kissed Katerina Lvovna lazily.

"You're fickle, Serezha," said Katerina Lvovna, feeling jealous. "You're not constant."

"I won't accept these words as applying to me," said Sergei quietly.

"Why do you kiss me in that way?"

Sergei became quite silent.

"It is only husbands and wives" continued Katerina Lvovna playing with his curls, "who take the dust off each others lips in that way. Kiss me now so that the young blossoms of the apple tree above us shall fall to the earth."

"In this way, in this way," whispered Katerina Lvovna embracing her lover and kissing him with passionate abandonment.

"Listen, Serezha to what I tell you," began Katerina Lvovna a little later, "why is it that everybody with one voice says that you are a deceiver?"

"Who cares to tell lies about me?"

"Well, people say so."

"Perhaps, at some time, I may have been false to those who were quite unworthy."

"And pray why did you have anything to do with the unworthy, you fool? It is stupid to make love to the worthless."

"It's all very well to talk! Is this a matter one can reason about? Temptation leads you astray. You have acted towards a woman quite simply,

without regard to any of those commandments, and she hangs herself on your neck. And there you have love."

"Listen, Serezha, I don't know what others there may have been, and don't want to know about them, but how you managed to persuade me, how you seduced me to our present love; you yourself know; how much was my desire, how much your cunning; but if you betray me for another, Serezha; if you leave me for any other, forgive me, sweetheart, for telling you, I will not part from you alive."

Sergei shuddered.

"But, Katerina Lvovna, you are my bright light," he began. "You can see for yourself how our affair stands. You have just remarked that I am melancholy to-day, and you don't reflect how I can be otherwise. Perhaps my whole heart is drenched with frozen blood."

"Tell me, Serezha, tell me your grief."

"What can I tell you? Here first of all, God help me, your husband will return; then, you, Sergei Filipych, must go away; go along to the back yard, to the musicians, and you can look out of the barn and see how the little candles burn in Katerina Lvovna's bedroom; how she shakes up her feather-bed, and how she is getting ready to sleep with her lawful husband, Zinovey Borisych."

"That will never be," said Katerina Lvovna gaily, and she waved her arms.

"What do you mean—'never be'? As I understand it, it can't be otherwise. I, too, Katerina Lvovna, have a heart and can see my own torments."

"That's enough, why keep on talking about it?"

It pleased Katerina Lvovna to see this expression of jealousy in Sergei, and she laughed and began to kiss him again.

"But I repeat," continued Sergei, quietly drawing his head away from Katerina Lvovna's arms that were bare to the shoulders, "I must own too that my miserable position causes me to reflect, not once but ten times, how it will all end. If I were, so to speak, your equal; if I were a gentleman, or a merchant, I would never part from you, Katerina Lvovna, in my whole life; but you can judge for yourself what sort of a man I am compared to you. When I see you now taken by your little white hand and led into the bedchamber, I must bear it all in my heart; and can even become in my own eyes a despised man for the rest of my life, Katerina Lvovna! I am not like the others who don't mind anything if they can only get pleasure from a woman. I feel what love is, and how like a black snake it is sucking my heart. . . ."

"Why are you telling me all this?" interrupted Katerina Lvovna.

She was sorry for Sergei.

"Katerina Lvovna, I must talk about it? How can I help talking about it? Supposing everything is explained and described to him; supposing, not only at some distant time, but even tomorrow, Sergei will no longer be here in flesh or in spirit?"

"No, no, don't talk about it, Serezha. This can never be. I can never exist without you," Katerina Lvovna said trying to comfort him with more of the same caresses. "If things come to that point, that either he or I cannot live—you will still be with me."

"This can never be, Katerina Lvovna," answered Seregi sadly, and he shook his head gloomily. "My life is miserable because of this love. If I loved someone no better than myself, I would be satisfied. How can I have your love for ever? Would it be an honour for you—to be my sweetheart? I want to become your husband in the holy eternal Church, and though I would always count myself unworthy of you, still I could show the whole world what the respect of my wife had made me worthy of . . . ."

Katerina Lvovna was dazed by Sergei's words, by his jealousy, by his desire to marry her—a desire that is pleasing to every woman, no matter how intimate her relations have been with the man

before marriage. Katerina Lvovna was ready to go through fire and water, to prison, or to the cross for Sergei. He had succeeded in making her so much in love with him, that there was no limit to her devotion. Her happiness made her mad, her blood boiled, and she could listen to nothing else. With a rapid motion she covered Sergei's mouth with the palm of her hand, and pressing his head to her breast she began to speak.

"Yes, I know how I can make you a merchant, and how I can live with you in quite the proper way. Only, you must not make me sad for nothing before our affairs are settled."

And again there were kisses and endearments.

The old clerk, who was sleeping in the barn, heard in the stillness of the night through his sound sleep whispers and low laughter, as if some roguish children were plotting together how they could better deride decrepit old age; or again, loud and gay laughter as if some one was tickling the water nymph of the lake. But it was only Katerina Lvovna who was gambolling and rolling about in the moonlight and who wantoned and played on the soft carpet with her husband's young clerk. The blossoming apple trees shed their young petals over them, till at last they also ceased to fall. By that time the short summer night was passing away; the moon hid behind the steep roof of the granary

and looked askance on the earth as it became dimmer and dimmer. From the roof of the kitchen a piercing cats' duet resounded, and then after angry spittings and splutters, two or three dishevelled cats rushed down a pile of boards that were propped up against the roof.

" Let's go to bed," said Katerina Lvovna, rising slowly, as if exhausted, from the carpet, and just as she had been lying there, in her shift and white petticoats, she went across the quiet, the deadly quiet, merchant's yard, while Sergei followed her carrying the carpet and her blouse, which she had thrown off in her frolics.

VII

KATERINA LVOVNA had scarcely had time to blow out her candle and to lie down on the soft feather-bed quite undressed, before sleep overpowered her. She was so tired after playing and diverting herself that she slept soundly; even her legs and arms slept; but again, as if in a dream, she heard the door open, and again the cat jumped with great agility on to the bed.

"Really it is a punishment to have this cat always here," reflected Katerina Lvovna wearily. "I locked the door on purpose with my own hands, the window is shut too and here he is again. I will turn him out directly," said Katerina Lvovna, trying to get up, but her sleepy arms and legs would not obey her, and the cat crept over her and mewed so strangely, that it sounded again as if it was uttering human speech. A cold shiver passed over Katerina Lvovna's whole body.

"No," thought she, "there is nothing else to be done; to-morrow I must certainly get some consecrated water and sprinkle the bed with it, because this is a most mysterious cat that is always coming to me."

But the cat purred and mewed close to her ear, stuck its muzzle into it, and said :

" What sort of a cat am I ? Why should I be a cat ? You, Katerina Lvovna, very wisely think that I am not a cat. I am really the well-known merchant Boris Timofeich. I am only feeling bad now, because all my inside has been split owing to the treat my daughter-in-law gave me. That is why I mew ; I have grown small in size, and appear like a cat to those who little think who I really am. How are you, Katerina Lvovna, and what sort of a life are you living with us ? How faithfully do you keep your vow ? I have come from the churchyard on purpose to see how you and Sergei Filipych are warming your husband's bed. It's all dark, you can play about, I see nothing. Don't be afraid of me. You see your treat has made my eyes rot away. Look at my eyes, my little friend, don't be afraid."

Katerina Lvovna glanced at him, and shrieked at the top of her voice. Between her and Sergei the cat was lying and its head was the full-sized head of Boris Timofeich, just as he had been as a corpse, only instead of eyes fiery circles whirled round and round in every direction.

Sergei awoke and comforted Katerina Lvovna, and again fell asleep ; but for her sleep had departed ; and it was well, too, that it had.

She lay with open eyes, when suddenly she seemed to hear a sound as if someone had climbed over the gate and was in the yard. The dogs began to bark, but soon ceased—they were probably being fondled. Another minute passed and she heard the key turn in the iron lock, and the door open. "Either I am dreaming or my Zinovey Borisych has returned, because the door has been opened with his latch-key," thought Katerina Lvovna and hastily nudged Sergei.

"Listen, Serezha," said she raising herself on her elbow and listening attentively.

Some one was really coming up the stairs, carefully placing his feet on the steps and approaching the locked door of the bedroom.

Katerina Lvovna hurriedly sprang out of bed in only her nightdress and opened the window. At the same moment Sergei bare-footed jumped out into the gallery, and his legs clasped the column by which he had many times descended from the mistress's bedroom.

"No, don't, don't. Lie down here, don't go far," whispered Katerina Lvovna, throwing his boots and clothes to him out of the window, and then slipped under the bed-clothes again and waited.

Sergei obeyed Katerina Lvovna; he did not slide down the column but hid under a shelf in the gallery.

Meanwhile Katerina Lvovna heard her husband come to the door and listen, holding his breath. She could even hear the rapid beating of his jealous heart; but she had no sorrow for him, only an evil laugh seized her.

"What's done can't be undone," she thought smiling and breathing like an innocent child.

This lasted for about ten minutes, but at last Zinovey Borisych got tired of standing on the other side of the door listening to his wife's breathing in her sleep, so he knocked.

"Who is there?" called Katerina Lvovna after a little time, feigning a sleepy voice.

"A friend," answered Zinovey Borisych.

"Is it you, Zinovey Borisych?"

"Of course it's I—as if you don't hear?"

Katerina Lvovna jumped out of bed, and in her shift just as she was, let her husband in and again dived into the warm bed.

"It somehow gets cold before dawn," said she wrapping herself up in the quilt.

Zinovey Borisych came in, looked round, said a prayer, lit a candle, and again looked round.

"How are you getting on?" he asked his wife.

"All right," answered Katerina Lvovna, and sitting up she began putting on a loose cotton blouse.

"I'm sure you'd like me to put on the samovar?" she asked.

"Oh, don't bother; call Aksinia, and let her do it."

Katerina Lvovna slipped her feet into her shoes and ran out of the room. It was more than half an hour before the returned. During that time she had blown the charcoal into a glow in the samovar and had quickly fluttered up to Sergei in the gallery.

"Remain here," she whispered.

"How long?" asked Sergei also in a whisper.

"Oh, how stupid you are! Stay here, till I call you."

And Katerina Lvovna hid him again in the same place.

From where he was in the gallery Sergei could hear everything that happened in the bedroom. He heard the door slam when Katerina Lvovna again went back to her husband. He could hear every word that was said.

"What have you been doing all this time," Zinovey Boirsych asked his wife.

"I have been getting the samovar to boil," she answered quietly.

There was a pause. Sergei could hear Zinovey Borisych hang his coat on the pegs. Then he washed, snorting and splashing the water about;

he asked for a towel and they again began to talk.

"Well, how did you come to bury father?" inquired her husband.

"He just died and was buried," answered his wife.

"What a strange thing it was!"

"God only knows," answered Katerina Lvovna, and began to rattle the cups.

Zinovey Borisych walked about the room gloomily.

"Well, and you? How have you passed your time?" Zinovey Borisych asked his wife.

"Our pleasures are known to everybody. We don't go to balls, nor to theatres either."

"It appears you are not very pleased to see your husband," observed Zinovey Borisych giving her a sudden glance.

"We are not such young things, you and I, that we should go out of our senses when we meet. How am I to show my delight? Here am I, fussing and running about to please you."

Katerina Lvovna again went out of the room to fetch the samovar, and again had time to run up to Sergei, nudge him, and whisper:

"Don't doze, Sergei, be ready."

Sergei could not understand to what all this was to lead; but he waited ready to be called.

When Katerina Lvovna returned to the room Zinovey Borisych was kneeling on the bed, hanging his silver watch and beadwork chain on the wall at the head of the bed.

"Katerina Lvovna, why have you made the bed for two when you were alone?" He asked his wife suddenly as if surprised.

"I was always expecting you," Katerina Lvovna answered calmly, looking at him.

"Even for that we must thank you humbly. But how did this thing happen to be lying on the feather-bed?"

Zinovey Borisych lifted Sergei's narrow woollen girdle from the sheet and held it up by the end before his wife's eyes.

Katerina Lvovna answered without hesitation:

"I found it in the garden, and tied my petticoat up with it."

"Yes!" said Zinovey Borisych with special emphasis, "we have also heard something about your petticoats."

"What have you heard about them?"

"About all the fine things you have done."

"I have done no fine things."

"Well, we shall soon find that out; we shall find out everything," answered Zinovey Borisych, pushing his empty cup towards his wife.

Katerina Lvovna remained silent.

"We shall bring all your actions to the light, Katerina Lvovna," said Zinovey Borisych after a long pause, frowning at her.

"Your Katerina Lvovna is not easily frightened; she is not much afraid of that," she answered.

"What's all this?" cried Zinovey Borisych raising his voice.

"Nothing—it's all over," answered his wife.

"Well—you just take care, you're getting too talkative!"

"Why can't I talk?" exclaimed Katerina Lvovna.

"You ought to have been more cautious."

"I have nothing to be cautious about. Much I care for what long-tongued vipers may have told you. Am I to put up with all sorts of abuse? That's something new."

"There are no long tongues; but they know all about your amours."

"About which of my amours?" cried Katerina Lvovna, getting angry in earnest.

"I know very well which."

"If you know, what then? You'd better be a little more explicit!"

Zinovey Borisych was silent and again pushed his cup towards her.

"Apparently you have nothing to say," cried Katerina Lvovna with contempt angrily throwing

a tea spoon on her husband's saucer. "Well, can't you say who has been accused? Who in your eyes is my lover?"

"You will hear; no need to hurry so."

"Is it about Sergei, perhaps, that they have been lying to you?"

"We shall find out, we shall find out, Katerina Lvovna; nobody can take away our authority over you, and nobody has a right to do so .... You yourself will tell us. . . ."

"Oh, I can't bear it," cried Katerina Lvovna, grinding her teeth, and getting as white as a sheet she suddenly ran out of the room.

"Well, there he is," said she a few seconds later re-entering the room and leading Sergei by the sleeve. "Now you can question him and me too about what you know. Perhaps you will hear even more than you want to."

Zinovey Borisych became confused. Looking from Sergei, who stood near the door, to his wife, who had calmly sat down on the edge of the bed and folded her arms, he could not understand where all this was leading.

"What are you doing, you snake?" He was scarcely able to utter and did not rise from his arm-chair.

"Question us about what you pretend to know so well," Katerina Lvovna answered audaciously.

"You thought to frighten me with your power," continued she significantly flashing her eyes on him; "that will never happen; but what I know I would do to you, perhaps even before your threats, that I will do."

"What does this mean? Get out!" Zinovey Borisych shouted at Sergei.

"Make him," said Katerina Lvovna with a sneer.

She went quietly to the door, locked it, and putting the key in her pocket lolled again on the bed.

"Now then Serezhenka come, come here, my darling," she said, coaxing the clerk towards her.

Sergei shook his curls and boldly sat down near the mistress.

"Good Lord! My God! what is this? What are you doing, you savages," cried Zinovey Borisych getting livid and rising from his chair.

"What? Don't you like it? See here, see here; my bright-eyed falcon, isn't he a beauty?"

Katerina Lvovna laughed and kissed Sergei passionately before her husband's eyes.

At that moment she received a deafening blow on her cheek, and Zinovey Borisych hurried to the open window.

VIII

"OH, so that's it! Well, my dear friend, thank you. I was only waiting for this," cried Katerina Lvovna. "Now one can see it will be neither your way nor my way."

With a sharp movement she threw Sergei from her and pounced on her husband from behind, and before Zinovey Borisych had time to reach the window, she had seized his throat with her thin fingers, and had thrown him on the floor like a sheaf of damp hemp.

Falling heavily Zinovey Borisych struck the back of his head against the floor with such force that he was quite dazed. He had not expected such a quick ending. This first act of violence that his wife had used against him proved to him that she was prepared for anything if she could only free herself from him, and that his present position was one of great danger. Zinovey Borisych realized this in an instant, at the moment of his fall, and did not cry out, knowing that his voice could not reach anybody's ears and might

only hasten the end. He looked round in silence, and with an expression of wrath, reproach and suffering, his eyes rested on his wife, whose thin fingers were tightly squeezing his throat.

Zinovey Borisych did not defend himself; his arms, with tightly clenched fists, lay stretched out jerking spasmodically; one of them was quite free; the other Katerina Lvovna pressed to the floor with her knee.

"Hold him," she whispered to Sergei in an indifferent voice and again turned to her husband.

Sergei sat down on the master, pressing his two arms down with his knees, and tried to seize him by the throat under Katerina Lvovna's hands, but at the same moment he uttered a cry of despair. The sight of the man who had wronged him, and the desire for bloody revenge aroused in Zinovey Borisych all his remaining strength, and with a violent effort he was able to free his imprisoned arms from the weight of Sergei's knees, and seizing hold of Sergei's black locks he bit at his throat like a wild beast. But it was not for long; Zinovey Borisych groaned heavily and his head fell back.

Katerina Lvovna, pale and hardly breathing, stood over her husband and lover; in her right hand she had a heavy metal candlestick, which she was holding by the top with the heavy part down-

wards. A thin stream of red blood trickled down Zinovey Borisych's temple and cheek.

"A priest . . ." Zinovey Borisych groaned hoarsely, and with loathing drew his head away as far as he could from Sergei, who was still sitting on him, ". . . to confess," he uttered still less distinctly, shivering and looking sideways at the hot blood that was thickening under his hair.

"You're good enough without that," murmured Katerina Lvovna.

"Enough trifling with him," she said to Sergei, "catch hold of his throat properly."

Zinovey Borisych gasped.

Katerina Lvovna stooped down and pressing her own hands over Sergei's, that were tightly clasped round her husband's throat, put her ear to his breast. After five quiet minutes she got up and said: "Enough; that will do for him."

Sergei also rose and took a long breath. Zinovey Borisych lay dead—strangled—and with a cut on his temple. Under his head on the left side was a little pool of blood, which, however, now flowed no longer from the small wound that had become clotted and congealed with hair.

Sergei carried Zinovey Borisych into the cellar under the floor of the little stone store-room, where he himself had so recently been locked up by the late Boris Timofeich, and then returned to

the attic. During this time Katerina Lvovna, with the sleeves of her loose jacket tucked up, and her skirts well lifted, had carefully washed away with bast and soap the blood stain left by Zinovey Borisych on the floor of his bedroom. The water had as yet not cooled in the samovar, out of which Zinovey Borisych, then master of the house, had been comforting his soul with poisoned tea, so the spot could be washed away without leaving any traces.

Katerina Lvovna took a brass slop-basin, and a piece of soaped bast.

"Now give me a light," she said to Sergei, going towards the door. "Lower, throw the light lower," said she, carefully examining all the floors over which Sergei had dragged Zinovey Borisych on the way to the cellar.

Only in two places on the painted floors there were two tiny spots the size of a cherry. Katerina Lvovna rubbed them with the bast and they disappeared.

"That will teach you not to steal on your wife like a thief and watch her," said Katerina Lvovna straightening herself and looking towards the store-house.

"Now it's all over," said Sergei and shuddered at the sound of his own voice.

When they returned to the bedroom a thin red

streak of dawn appeared in the eastern sky, and the apple trees, faintly tinted with gold, looked through the green fence of the garden into Katerina Lvovna's room.

The old clerk, with a short fur coat thrown over his shoulders, yawning and crossing himself, crept across the yard from the barn to the kitchen.

Katerina Lvovna pulled the shutters carefully up by their strings, and attentively looked at Sergie as if she wanted to read his soul.

"Well, now you are a merchant," said she placing her white hands on Sergei's shoulders.

Sergei did not answer her.

Sergei's lips trembled and he shook all over as if with ague. Only Katerina Lvovna's lips were cold.

After two days large blisters caused by the use of a heavy spade and crow-bar appeared on Sergei's hands; but, because of them, Zinovey Borisych was so well stowed away in his cellar, that without the aid of his widow or her lover nobody could have found him till the day of the Last Judgment.

IX

SERGEI went about with a crimson handkerchief round his neck, and complained that something was sticking in his throat. Even before the marks left on Sergei's throat by Zinovey Borisych's teeth had healed, people began to wonder about Katerina Lvovna's husband. Sergei himself began to talk about him oftener than anyone else. Of an evening he would come and sit down on the bench near the gate with the other young fellows and begin ; " It is strange, comrades, that the master has not returned yet."

The other young fellows were also surprised.

Then the news was brought from the mill that the master had hired horses, and had long ago started for home. The postilion who had driven him related that Zinovey Borisych had appeared to be put out, and had dismissed him in a strange manner ; about three *versts* from the town near the monastery he had got out of the cart, taken his bag, and walked away. Hearing this strange story people began to wonder still more.

Zinovey Borisych was lost, that was all.

Search was made for him, but nothing could be discovered; it was as if the merchant had vanished off the face of the earth. By the evidence of the postilion, who had been arrested, it was only known that he had left the cart near the river which passed by the monastery. The matter was not cleared up, and in the meantime Katerina Lvovna in her widowed state was able to live more freely with Sergei. They invented stories that Zinovey Borisych had been seen first in one place then in another, but Zinovey Borisych still did not come back and Katerina Lvovna knew better than anyone that it was quite impossible for him to return.

In this way one month passed and another and a third and Katerina Lvovna felt herself with child.

"The capital will be ours, Serezhechka. I shall have an heir," she said to Sergei, and went to the town council to tell them that she was pregnant; to complain that a stoppage in the business had occurred and to ask to be allowed to carry it on.

Why should a commercial undertaking be ruined? Katerina Lvovna was the lawful wife of her husband, there were apparently no debts, so that she ought to be allowed to carry it on. And she was allowed.

Katerina Lvovna lived and reigned and by her orders Sergei was addressed as Sergei Filipych. Then suddenly quite unexpectedly there was a

new disaster. A letter came from Liven to the mayor of the town, informing him that Boris Timofeich had traded not only with his own money, but that a great part of the capital in the business belonged to his nephew Fedor Zakharov Lyamin, a minor, and that the business must be looked into and not left entirely in Katerina Lvovna's hands. When this news arrived the mayor spoke about it to Katerina Lvovna, and suddenly a week later—behold an old woman and a small boy arrived from Liven.

"I am the late Boris Timofeich's cousin," said she, "and this is my nephew, Fedor Lyamin."

Katerina Lvovna received them.

Sergei, who watched this arrival from the yard and the reception Katerina Lvovna gave them, became as white as an altar-cloth.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the mistress noticing his deadly pallor, as he followed the visitors and remained in the passage watching them.

"Nothing," answered the clerk turning round and going from the passage into the entrance. "I was thinking what a surprise these people from Liven are," he said with a sigh as he closed the door of the entrance after him.

"Well, how will it be now?" Sergei asked Katerina Lvovna as they sat together that night

drinking tea. "Now, Katerina Lvovna, all our affairs will turn to ashes."

"Why to ashes, Serezha?"

"Because it will all be divided now. What use will it be to carry on a trifling business?"

"What, Serezha, will it be too little for you?"

"No, it's not about myself I'm thinking. I'm just wondering if we shall have the same happiness."

"How so? Why should we not have happiness, Serezha?"

"Because I love you so much that I want, Katerina Lvovna, to see you a real lady, and not as you have lived so far," answered Sergei Filipich, "and now it will be just the contrary; with the decrease of the capital we will have to sink even lower than before."

"What do I care, Serezha?"

"It may be true, Katerina Lvovna, that perhaps for you it has no interest, but for me, because I respect you, and also to the eyes of the world, mean and envious though they are, it will be terribly painful. You can feel, of course, as you like, but I in my judgment can see that, under these circumstances, I can never be happy."

Sergei began to play upon Katerina Lvovna to this tune; that through Fedia Lyamin he had become the most unhappy man, being deprived in future of the power to exalt and distinguish her,

Katerina Lvovna, in the eyes of all the merchants. Every time Sergei brought it to the same conclusion: that if this Fedia did not exist and she gave birth to a child, before the end of nine months after the disappearance of her husband, the whole property would belong to her and that then there would be no end to their happiness.

X

THEN Sergei suddenly stopped talking about the heir. As soon as Sergei ceased talking about him, Katerina Lvovna could not get Fedia Lyamin out of her mind or her heart. She became pensive and even less loving to Sergei. When she was asleep, when she was looking after the business, or when she was praying to God, she had but one thought in her mind: "Why is it so? Why indeed should I lose the capital through him? I have suffered so much, I have taken so much sin on my soul," thought Katerina Lvovna, "and he comes here without any trouble and takes it away from me. If at least he were a man, but this child—this boy . . . ."

The early frosts were setting in. Of course no news of Zinovey Borisych came from anywhere. Katerina Lvovna became bigger and went about always more pensive. In the town there was much gossip about her. They wondered why the young Izmaylova, who had so far been barren, and had always grown thin and pined away, now suddenly began to grow larger. All this time the

boyish heir Fedia Lyamin wandered about the yard in his light, white squirrel fur coat, and broke the cat-ice on the puddles.

"What are you doing there, Fedor Ignatich?" cried the cook Aksinia to him, as she ran across the yard. "Is it fit for you, a merchant's son, to poke about in the puddles?"

But the heir, who was such a trouble to Katerina Lvovna and to the object of her affections, only frolicked about light-heartedly like a young kid, or slept tranquilly opposite his fond great-aunt, not thinking or realizing that he stood in anybody's way or had diminished anybody's happiness.

At last Fedia caught the chicken-pox, and besides had a bad cold and pain in the chest, so the boy was put to bed. At first he was treated with herbs and simples, but at last a doctor had to be sent for.

The doctor came frequently and prescribed medicines, which were to be given to him at certain hours by his grand-aunt; or sometimes she asked Katerina Lvovna to do it.

"Please, Katerinushka," she would say, "you yourself will soon be a mother, you are awaiting the will of God, be so good . . . ."

Katerina Lvovna never refused the old woman. Whenever she went to the evening service to pray for "the lad Fedor lying on the bed of sickness,"

or whenever she went to the early liturgy to get him consecrated bread, Katerina Lvovna would sit by the invalid, give him cooling drinks and administer his medicine at the proper time.

So the old woman went to the evening service and to vespers on the eve of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, and begged Katerinushka to look after Fedyushka. At that time the boy was already recovering.

Katerina Lvovna came into Fedia's room. He was sitting up in bed in his squirrel coat, reading the "Lives of the Fathers."

"What are you reading, Fedia?" Katerina Lvovna asked, as she sat down in an arm chair.

"I'm reading the 'Lives,' auntie."

"Are they interesting?"

"Very interesting, auntie."

Katerina Lvovna leaned on her hand and watched Fedia's moving lips, when suddenly she was seized, as by demons escaped from their chains, by her former thoughts of all the evil that this boy had caused her, and what a good thing it would be if he were not there.

"Well, what then?" thought Katerina Lvovna, "he is ill, he has to take medicine . . . all sorts of things can happen during illness. . . . One has but to say that the doctor made a mistake with the medicine."

"It's time for your medicine, Fedia."

"Perhaps, auntie," answered the boy, and emptying the spoon he added, "Auntie, these stories of the saints are very interesting."

"Well, go on reading," Katerina Lvovna continued and casting her eyes round the room with a cold glance, let them rest on the frost-covered windows.

"I must order the shutters to be closed," said she going into the sitting-room, and thence into the hall, and then upstairs into her own room where she sat down.

Five minutes later Sergei, in a Romanov short fur coat trimmed with thick seal skin, joined her there.

"Have they closed the shutters?" Katerina Lvovna asked him.

"They have closed them," answered Sergei, snuffing the candles with the snuffers, and stopped near the stove.

They were both silent.

"Vespers will not be finished soon to-day?" asked Katrina Lvovna.

"To-morrow is a big festival; the service will be long," answered Sergei.

There was again silence.

"I'd better go to Fedia; he is alone," said Katerina Lvovna, rising.

"Alone?" asked Sergei, looking at her askance.

"Alone," she answered in a whisper, "what then?"

Their eyes seemed to flash lightning glances to each other, but neither said a word.

Katerina Lvovna went down, and passed through the empty rooms; it was quiet everywhere; the lamps glimmered quietly before the icons; only her own shadow ran along the walls; the closed shutters had made the windows thaw, and the water was dripping from them. Fedia was sitting reading. When he saw Katerina Lvovna he only said:

"Auntie, put this book away, please, and give me that other one from the icon shelf."

Katerina Lvovna did what her nephew asked, and gave him the other book.

"Fedia, don't you want to go to sleep?"

"No, auntie, I want to wait for Granny."

"Why should you wait for her?"

"She promised to bring me a consecrated loaf from Vespers."

Katerina Lvovna suddenly became pale; her own child had moved under her heart, for the first time and a cold feeling passed over her breast. She stood for a time in the middle of the room, and then went out rubbing her cold hands.

"Well," she whispered, quietly entering her

bedroom, where she found Sergei still in the same position near the stove.

"What?" asked Sergei scarcely audibly, as if choking.

"He's alone!"

Sergei frowned and began to breathe heavily.

"Come," said Katerina Lvovna, suddenly turning to the door.

Sergei hastily took off his boots and asked:

"What shall we take?"

"Nothing," answered Katerina Lvovna under her breath, and quietly taking him by the hand she drew him after her.

XI

THE sick boy shuddered and dropped the book on his knees, when Katerina Lvovna entered his room for the third time.

"What is it, Fedia?"

"Oh, auntie, something frightened me," answered he, with a troubled smile, and cowered into a corner of the bed.

"What frightened you?"

"Who came with you, auntie?"

"Where? Nobody came with me, darling."

"Nobody?"

The boy stretched himself towards the foot of the bed, and screwing up his eyes looked towards the door through which his aunt had entered, and seemed to be re-assured.

"I must have imagined it," said he.

Katerina Lvovna stopped and leaned against the head of her nephew's bed.

Fedia looked up at his aunt, and remarked to her that she had for some reason grown quite pale.

In answer to this observation, Katerina Lvovna only pretended to cough, and looked expectantly

at the sitting-room door. But only the floor creaked slightly there.

"I am reading the life of my guardian angel, Saint Theodor Stratelates, auntie. How well he served God."

Katerina Lvovna stood there silent.

"Auntie, won't you sit down and let me read it to you again," said her nephew coaxingly.

"Wait a moment—directly. I must just trim the icon lamp in the drawing-room," answered Katerina Lvovna, and left the room with hasty steps.

In the drawing-room the very faintest whispers could be heard, but, in the general silence, they reached the sharp ears of the child.

"Auntie, what is this? With whom are you whispering there?" cried the boy, with tears in his voice. "Come here, auntie, I am afraid," he cried again a second later, even more tearfully and he heard Katerina Lvovna say in the drawing-room "Well!" which he thought was addressed to him.

"What are you afraid of?" asked Katerina Lvovna, in a somewhat hoarse voice, as she came into the room with a firm, decided step, and stopped before his bed in such a position that the door to the drawing-room was hidden from the invalid by her body. Then she said, "Lie down!"

"I don't want to, auntie."

"No, Fedia, listen to me and lie down; it is time to lie down," Katerina Lvovna repeated.

"Why, auntie? I don't at all want to."

"No, you must lie down; lie down at once," said Katerina Lvovna, in a changed shaky voice and seizing the boy under the arms, she put his head on the pillow.

At that moment Fedia shrieked with fear; he had perceived Sergei pale and barefooted entering the room.

Katerina Lvovna placed the palm of her hand over the frightened child's open mouth and cried:

"Quickly now; hold him tight; keep him from struggling."

Sergei seized Fedia by the arms and legs, and Katerina Lvovna with one rapid movement covered the childish face of the victim with a large down pillow and threw herself on it with her firm elastic bosom.

For four minutes there was the silence of the grave in the room.

"He's dead," whispered Katerina Lvovna, and had only just risen to put everything in order again, when the walls of the quiet house, that had concealed so many crimes, were shaken by deafening blows: the windows rattled, the floors shook, the chairs of the hanging icon lamps

trembled and fantastic shadows flitted around the walls.

Sergei shuddered and ran off as fast as his legs would carry him. Katerina Lvovna followed him, and the noise and hubbub pursued them. It seemed as if some unearthly power was shaking the guilty house to its foundations.

Katerina Lvovna was afraid that Sergei, in his fear, would run into the yard and betray himself but he rushed straight to the attic.

In the darkness at the top of the stairs Sergei struck his forehead against the half-opened door and with a groan fell down, completely losing his senses from superstitious fear.

"Zinovey Borisych, Zinovey Borisych," he mumbled as he fell down the stairs head foremost, knocking Katerina Lvovna off her feet and carrying her with him in his fall.

"Where?" asked she.

"There, above us; he flew past with a sheet of iron. There, there again. Oh, oh!" cried Sergei, "it thunders, it thunders again."

It was quite plain now that in the street numberless hands were knocking at all the windows, and someone was trying to break in the door.

"You fool—get up, you fool," cried Katerina Lvovna, and with these words she hastened to Fedia, settled his dead head on the pillow in the

most natural sleeping position, and with a firm hand opened the door, through which a crowd of people streamed into the house.

It was a terrible sight. Katerina Lvovna, looking out over the heads of the crowd that was besieging the porch, saw streams of strange people climbing over the high wooden fence into the yard, and heard the moaning of many human voices in the street.

Before Katerina Lvovna was able to understand anything, she was crushed back into the room by the crowd that surrounded the porch.

XII

ALL this alarm had been caused in this way. At Vespers on the eve of one of the twelve great festivals, there are always immense crowds in the churches of the provincial but important industrial town in which Katerina Lvovna lived, and in the church that was celebrating its special festival such numbers of people would collect that not even an apple could have fallen to the ground. It was the custom for choirs, composed of young men belonging to the merchant classes, led by a special precentor, also a lover of the vocal art, to sing in the church on such occasions.

Our people are godly, assiduous churchgoers, and artistic as well. Ecclesiastical magnificence and harmonious singing constitute one of their chief and purest enjoyments. Wherever the choirs sing, nearly half the town assembles to hear them, especially the youth of the merchant classes: the clerks, the boys, the youths, the hands from the factories and workshops, and even the manufacturers themselves with their better halves; all crowd together in the same church; everybody

wants to be there if only in the porch, or under the windows, despite burning heat or hard frost, to hear how the octaves swell, or the powerful tenor executes the most difficult variations.

The parish church of the Izmailov family was consecrated in honour of the Presentation in the Temple of the Blessed Virgin, and therefore on the eve of that festival, at the time that the events just related occurred, the youth of the whole town was collected there, and they left the church in a noisy crowd talking about the merits of a well-known tenor, and the accidental blunders of a no less celebrated bass.

Not all were occupied with these musical questions; there were some people in the crowd who interested themselves in other subjects.

"Yes, boys, fine things are related about that young Izmailova," said a young mechanic, who had been brought from Petersburg by one of the merchants for his steam factory, "they say," continued he, "that she and their young clerk Sergei are making love every minute."

"Everybody knows that," answered a man in a sheepskin coat covered with blue cloth. "She was not in church this evening either."

"Church indeed? That wicked young woman is so odious, that she no longer fears God, nor her conscience, nor the eye of man."

" See they have a light," remarked the mechanic pointing to a bright stripe between the shutters.

" Look through the chink—see what they are doing," called several voices.

The mechanic climbed on to the shoulders of two of his companions, and had scarcely put his eye to the opening in the shutter when he shouted at the top of his voice.

" Good people, brothers, they are smothering somebody here, smothering somebody."

And the mechanic began desperately to knock at the shutters, a dozen others followed his example, and springing to the windows began hammering at them with their fists.

The crowd increased in numbers every minute, and the Izmaylov's house was beseiged as has been related.

" I myself saw it, I saw it with my own eyes," the mechanic affirmed pointing to the dead body of Fedia. " The boy was lying on his bed and they were both suffocating him."

Sergei was taken to the police station that same evening ; Katerina Lvovna was led to her upper room and two guards were stationed over her.

It was unbearably cold in the Ismaylov's house, the stoves were unheated ; the door did not remain closed for an instant ; great crowds of curious people followed on each other's heels. All came

to look at Fedia lying in his coffin and at another large coffin quite covered up to the lid with a wide shroud. On Fedia's forehead was a white satin band which covered the red line that was left after the skull had been opened. The post-mortem examination proved that Fedia's death had been caused by suffocation, and Sergei, when he was confronted with the corpse, began to cry at the first words of the priest who told him of the Last Judgment and of the punishment of the unrepentant, and candidly confessed not only the murder of Fedia, but also begged that Zinovey Borisych, who had been buried by him without a funeral service, should be disinterred. The corpse of Katerina Lvovna's husband, that had been buried in dry sand, was as yet not entirely decomposed. It was taken out and laid in a large coffin. To the general horror Sergei said that his accomplice in both these cruel murders had been the young mistress. To all the questions put to her Katerina Lvovna only answered: "I know nothing about this. I know nothing about it." They obliged Sergei to give evidence before her. Having heard his confession, Katerina Lvovna looked at him with dumb astonishment but without anger, and then said unconcernedly:

"Since he wished to tell it, I have nothing to disavow. I killed them."

"Why did you do it?" she was asked.

"For him," she answered pointing to Sergei, who hung his head.

The criminals were taken to prison, and this terrible case, which had attracted general attention and indignation, soon came up for judgment. At the end of February Sergei and the widow of the third guild merchant, Katerina Lvovna, were condemned to be flogged on the market-place of their town, and then to be sent to penal servitude. In the beginning of March, on a cold frosty morning the executioner inflicted the appointed number of blue-red lashes on Katerina Lvovna's bare, white back and then also administered the allotted portion of strokes on Sergei's shoulders, and branded his handsome face with the three marks of a convict.

During the whole of this time, for some reason, Sergei aroused much more sympathy than Katerina Lvovna. Dirty and bloodstained he stumbled when he descended from the black scaffold, but Katerina Lvovna came down quietly, only taking care that the thick shift and coarse convict jacket should not come in contact with her lacerated back. Even in the prison hospital, when they handed her child to her she only said: "What do I want with him!" turned to the wall and without a groan, without a complaint, fell with her bosom on the hard pallet.

XIII

THE gang of convicts with which Sergei and Katerina Lvovna went started when the spring, according to the calendar, had begun, but the sun, as the popular saying is, "shone brightly but did not warm."

Katerina Lvovna's child was given to Boris Timofeich's old cousin to be brought up, as the infant being considered the legitimate son of the criminal's husband remained the sole heir to the whole of the Izmaylov's property. Katrina Lvovna was very pleased at this, and gave up her baby with great indifference. Her love for the father, as is the case with many passionate women, was not transferred in the slightest degree to the child.

Besides for her neither light nor darkness existed, neither goodness nor badness, neither sorrow nor joy; she understood nothing, loved nobody, not even herself. She only awaited impatiently the departure of the gang of convicts, as she hoped on the way to see her Serezhenhka again, and she even forgot to think about the child.

Katerina Lvovna's hopes did not deceive her:

heavily fettered with chains and branded, Sergei passed through the prison gates with the party in which she was.

Man is able to accommodate himself, as far as possible, to every horrible position in which he may find himself, and in every position he is able to retain the power of pursuing his own scanty pleasures; but Katerina Lvovna had no need to adapt herself to circumstances; she again saw Sergei, and with him even the convict's path was bright with happiness for her.

Katerina Lvovna took but few things of value with her in her linen sack, and even less money. But long before they reached Nizhni she had given all this to the guards who accompanied them, for the permission to walk next to Sergei on the way, or to be allowed to stand with him and embrace him for an hour on dark nights in a corner of the narrow corridor of the cold halting-stations.

But Katerina Lvovna's branded friend became very unaffectionate towards her; every word he said to her was harsh; he did not set much value on the secret meetings with her, for which she went without food and drink and gave away the most precious twenty-five copeck pieces out of her already lean purse, and more than once he said:

"Instead of paying the guard to come and rub

against the corners of the corridor with me, you'd do better to give me the money."

"I only gave a quarter, Serezhenka," said Katerina Lvovna in self defence.

"Isn't a quarter money? How many quarters have you picked up on the way? You've distributed many apparently."

"But, Serezha, we have seen each other."

"Well, what good is that? What sort of joy have we in meeting after all this suffering? You ought to curse your life and not think of meetings."

"It's all the same to me, Serezha, if I can only see you."

"That's all nonsense," answered Sergei.

Sometimes Katerina Lvovna bit her lips to blood at such answers, and sometimes in the darkness of their nocturnal meetings tears of anger and vexation rose to her eyes, that had never wept before; but she bore everything; was always silent, and tried to deceive herself.

In this manner, in these new relations to each other, they reached Nizhni Novgorod. There the party was joined by another detachment of convicts, on their way to Siberia from the Moscow district.

In this large gang, among a number of all sorts of people, there were in the women's division two very interesting characters; one was the wife of a

soldier, Fiona, from Yaroslavl, a magnificently beautiful woman, tall, with a thick black plait and languid hazel eyes, over which the long lashes hung like a mysterious veil; and the other a pretty girl of seventeen, with a sharp face, delicate skin, a tiny mouth, dimples in her fresh cheeks, and fair golden locks that capriciously peeped out on her forehead from beneath her striped convict kerchief. This girl was called by the others Sonetka.

Fiona, the beauty, had a soft and lazy disposition. In her party all knew her and none of the men were specially delighted to have success with her, and none of them were mortified to see that she allowed the same favours to anybody else who tried for them.

"Aunt Fiona is the kindest of women, she never snubs anyone," all the convicts said jestingly.

But Sonetka was quite of another sort.

They said about her:

"She's like an eel, she twirls round your hands, but you can never get hold of her."

Sonetka had her own taste, made her choice, and perhaps even a very severe choice; she wanted a passion to be presented to her, not as an ordinary dish, but under a highly spiced sauce, with sufferings and sacrifices; but Fiona had the simplicity of the Russian woman, who is even too lazy to say, "go away," to anybody and only knows that she is

a woman. Such women are very highly prized in robber bands, gangs of convicts, and in the Petersburg social-democratic communes.

The appearance of these two women in the party which was now united with the gang in which Sergei and Katerina Lvovna were, had a very tragic result for the latter.

XIV

IN the first day's march of the two united detachments from Nizhni to Kasan, Sergei began, in a very marked manner, to try to ingratiate himself into the favour of the soldier's wife Fiona, and not without success. The languid beauty Fiona did not cause Sergei to want her long as, owing to her goodness, she never allowed anyone to pine for her. At the third or fourth station Katerina Lvovna had, by means of bribery, arranged a meeting with Sergei, and lay awake expecting the guard on duty to come up to her, nudge her and whisper quietly: "Run quickly." The door opened once and some woman ran into the corridor; the door opened again and another convict jumped quickly from her pallet, and disappeared after the guard; at last somebody pulled the jacket with which Katerina Lvovna was covered. The young woman sprang hurriedly from the boards, that many convicts had polished so well with their sides, threw her jacket over her shoulders, and nudged the guard who was standing near her.

When Katerina Lvovna went along the dark corridor, which was lighted only in one place by a

tallow dip, she knocked up against two or three couples who could not be seen at a distance, and in passing the door of the men's ward, she heard suppressed laughter that came through the little window cut in it.

"Eh, they're having fun," the guard who conducted Katerina Lvovna mumbled discontentedly, and taking her by the shoulders he pushed her into a corner and went away.

Katerina Lvovna groping about felt a woman's jacket and a beard; her other hand touched a woman's hot face.

"Who's that?" Sergei asked in an undertone.

"What are you doing here? Who are you with?"

Katerina Lvovna tore her rival's handkerchief off. The latter ran away, and tripping over some one fell down.

Hearty laughter resounded from the men's ward.

"Villain," hissed Katerina Lvovna and hit Sergei across the face with the end of the handkerchief she had torn from his new friend's head.

Sergei lifted his hand, but Katerina Lvovna slipped quickly away along the corridor, and regained her door. The laughter in the men's ward became so loud that the sentry, who was standing apathetically near the dip, spitting at the toes of his boots, lifted his head and growled:

"Hsss!"

Katerina Lvovna lay down in silence, and remained thus till morning. She wanted to say to herself: "I don't love him," and felt that she loved him more passionately than ever, and before her eyes she saw the whole time, how he lay there with one trembling hand under the other woman's head and with the other embracing her hot shoulders.

The poor woman wept and prayed against her wish that, the hand might be at that moment under her head, and that the other arm might be embracing her own hysterically shaking shoulders.

"Well, in any case, give me my handkerchief," said the soldier's wife Fiona, the next morning arousing her.

"So it was you!"

"Give it me, please."

"Why do you part us?"

"How do I part you? As if this is love or interest? Why do you get cross?"

Katerina Lvovna thought for a moment, and then taking the torn handkerchief from under her pillow she threw it at Fiona, and turned to the wall.

She felt better.

"Faugh!" she said to herself. "Is it possible that I am jealous of this painted wash-tub? The devil take her! To compare myself with her makes me sick."

"Look here, Katerina Lvovna, just listen to me," said Sergi the next day on the road. "First understand, I beg you, that I am not your Zinovey Borisych, and secondly that you are no longer the great merchant's wife. So don't blaze up. These grand airs are no good now."

Katerina Lvovna did not answer, and for a week she went along without exchanging a word or a look with Sergei. As the injured party she showed character, and did not want to make the first step towards reconciliation in this, her first quarrel, with Sergei.

In the meantime while Katerina Lvovna was cross with Sergei he began to talk nonsense and joke with fair little Sonetka. Sometimes he would bow to her and say: "Our charmer," or he would smile, or find an opportunity of meeting her, of embracing and pressing her to himself. Katerina Lvovna saw all this and her heart only boiled the more.

"Should I get reconciled to him?" Katerina Lvovna thought as she staggered along, not seeing the ground under her feet.

But now, more than ever, her pride would not allow her to take the first step towards reconciliation. During this time Sergei became more and more intimate with Sonetka, and all began to whisper that the unapproachable Sonetka, who like an eel twirled round everybody's hands without

being caught, had somehow become much more tame.

"Do you see that," said Fiona to Katerina Lvovna, "you cried about me. Now what have I done to you? I had my chance, but it's over. You'd better look to Sonetka."

"All my pride has deserted me, I must certainly be reconciled now," Katerina Lvovna decided, only thinking what would be the best way to set about the reconciliation.

Sergei himself helped her out of this difficult position.

"Lvovna," he called to her during the rest, "come to me for a minute this night; I have some business for you."

Katerina Lvovna was silent.

"What, are you still cross? Won't you come?"

Katerina Lvovna again made no answer.

However, Sergei and all the others who watched Katerina Lvovna saw that when they were approaching the halting-place she kept getting nearer to the guard, and shoved into his hand seventeen copecks, some alms she had received from the communes.

"As soon as I collect them I will give you ten copecks more," begged Katerina Lvovna.

The guard hid the money in his cuff and said:

"All right."

When these discussions were over Sergei grunted and winked at Sonetka.

"Ah, my Katerina Lvovna," said he, embracing her as he mounted the steps of the halting-station, "there's no woman like her in the whole world, comrades."

"Katerina Lvovna blushed and became breathless with happiness.

At night, as soon as the door opened quietly, she jumped up; trembling she groped for Sergei with her hands in the dark corridor.

"My Katia," whispered Sergei embracing her.

"Oh, my own rascal," answered Katerina Lvovna through her tears, pressing her lips to his.

The guard walked about the corridor stopping to spit on his boots and went on again, the tired convicts snored on the other side of the doors, a mouse gnawed a feather under the stove, the crickets vied with each other in their loud chirps, and Katerina Lvovna still enjoyed her bliss.

But ecstasies tire and the inevitable prose has its turn.

"I'm in deadly pain. Right from the ankle to the knee it gnaws my bones," complained Sergei sitting with Katerina Lvovna on the floor in the corner of the corridor.

"What's to be done, Serezhenka?" she asked, nestling under the skirts of his coat.

"All that remains to be done, is to ask to be put into hospital in Kasan."

"Oh! What do you mean, Serezha?"

"What can I do? This pain will be my death."

"How can you remain when I shall be driven on?"

"What's to be done? It rubs, I tell you it rubs; the chain is eating into the bone. If I had woollen stockings to put on that might help," said Sergei a minute later.

"Stockings? I still have some. New stockings, Sergei."

"What of that?" answered Sergei.

Without saying another word, Katerina Lvovna quickly vanished into the ward, rummaged in her bag on the boards and then hastily returned to Sergei with a pair of thick blue woollen stockings with bright red clocks at the sides.

"Now it will be all right," said Sergei, taking leave of Katerina Lvovna and accepting her last stockings.

Katerina Lvovna returned to her boards quite happy and was soon sound asleep.

When she had returned to the corridor she had not noticed that Sonetka went out of the ward, nor had she heard her return just before morning.

All this took place only two days' march from Kasan.

XV

A COLD rainy day, with gusts of wind and sleet, inhospitably greeted the party of convicts when they left the stuffy halting-station. Katerina Lvovna came out fairly cheerfully, but she had hardly taken her place in the row when she turned green and trembled all over. It grew black before her eyes, and all her joints ached and weakened. Sonetka stood before her in the well-known pair of blue woollen stockings with red clocks.

Katerina Lvovna started on her way almost lifeless; only her eyes were fixed with a terrible look on Sergei, and she never took them off him.

At the first halt she quietly went up to Sergei, whispered "Scoundrel," and quite unexpectedly spat in his face.

Sergei wanted to fall upon her, but the others held him back.

"Just you wait," said he wiping himself.

"All the same she treats you audaciously," jeered the other convicts, and Sonetka greeted him with specially gay laughter.

This intrigue into which Sonetka had entered was quite to her taste.

"This is not the last you will hear of it," Sergei threatened Katerina Lvovna.

Worn out by the long distance and the bad weather, Katerina Lvovna with a broken heart slept restlessly on the hard boards at night in the halting-station and did not hear two men come into the women's ward.

When they entered Sonetka sat up on her pallet and silently pointed to Katerina Lvovna, lay down again, and covered herself up with her coat.

At that moment Katerina Lvovna's coat was thrown over her head, and the thick end of a double-twisted cord was swung with all the strength of a peasant's arm across her back, which was only covered by a coarse shift.

Katerina Lvovna shrieked but her voice could not be heard under the coat in which her head was wrapt up. She struggled, but also without success, as a burly convict was sitting on her shoulders holding her arms.

"Fifty," counted a voice at last, and it was not difficult to recognize the voice of Sergei, and then the nocturnal visitors disappeared behind the door.

Katerina Lvovna disentangled her head and got

up, but nobody was there, only not far off somebody under a coat tittered malevolently. Katerina Lvovna recognized Sonetka's laugh.

This insult passed all measure, and there was also no limit to the feeling of wrath which boiled up at that moment in Katerina Lvovna's soul. Not knowing what she did she rushed forward and fell unconscious on Fiona's breast and was caught in her arms.

On that full bosom, which so lately had diverted with its sweet depravity Katerina Lvovna's faithless lover, she now sobbed out her own unbearable sorrow, and pressed herself close to her stupid and coarse rival, as a child would to its mother. They were now equal. They were both of equal price and both cast away.

They were equal!—the caprice of a passing moment—Fiona; and she who had committed that drama of love, Katerina Lvovna.

Nothing was an insult to Katerina Lvovna now. Having shed her tears she became hardened and with wooden calmness prepared to go out to the roll-call.

The drum sounded Rapa-ta-tap. The prisoners went out into the yard; the chained and the unchained Sergei and Fiona, Sonetka and Katerina Lvovna; the schismatic fettered to the Jew, the Pole on the same chain with the Tarter.

All crowded together, then formed into some sort of order and started.

It was a most desolate picture: a small number of people torn from the light and deprived of every shadow of hope of a better future—sinking into the cold black mud of the common road. Everything around was frightfully ugly: unending mud, a grey sky, the leafless wet cytisus and the ravens with bristling feathers sitting in their spreading branches. The wind sighed and raged, howled and tore.

In these hellish, soul-rending sounds that completed the horror of the picture there seemed to echo the advice of the wife of the biblical Job: "Curse the day of your birth and die."

Those who do not wish to listen to these words; those who are not attracted by the thoughts of death even in this sorrowful position, but are frightened by them, must try to silence these warring voices by something even more monstrous. The simple man understands this very well; he lets lose all his animal simplicity, begins to play the fool, to laugh at himself, at other people and at feelings. At no time very delicate he becomes doubly bad.

. . . . . .

"Well, my merchant's wife, is your honour in good health?" Sergei asked Katerina Lvovna

impudently as soon as the village where they had passed the night, disappeared out of sight behind the wet hills.

With these words he turned at once to Sonetka, covered her up with his coat, and began to sing in a high falsetto voice :

"In the shade behind the window a fair head appears;
You don't sleep, my tormenter, you don't sleep, you rogue.
With my coat skirt I shall cover you, so that none shall see."

When he sang these words Sergei put his arms round Sonetka and gave her a loud kiss before the whole party.

Katerina Lvovna saw all this, and yet did not see it. She went along like a lifeless person. The others nudged her and pointed out how Sergei was playing the fool with Sonetka. She had become an object of ridicule.

" Leave her alone," Fiona said, trying to defend her, when one of the party attempted to laugh at Katerina Lvovna as she stumbled blindly along ; " you devils, don't you see that the woman is quite ill ? "

" Probably she got wet feet," a young convict said waggishly.

" Naturally, she's from a merchant's race ; had a delicate up-bringing," answered Sergei.

" Of course, if she had warm stockings, it would not be so bad," continued he.

Katerina Lvovna seemed to wake up.

"Vile serpent," she uttered, unable to bear it any more; "laugh at me, villain, laugh at me."

"No, I am not laughing at all, my merchant's wife. I only say it because Sonetka wants to sell some stockings that are still quite good, so I thought our merchant's wife might perhaps buy them."

Many laughed; Katerina Lvovna walked on like an automaton.

The weather became worse. From the dark clouds that covered the sky wet snow fell in large flakes, that melted as soon as it reached the ground, and added to the impassable mud. At last a long leaden line could be seen; the other side of it could not be distinguished. This line was the Volga. Over the Volga a strong wind blew, and rocked the slowly-rising, dark-crested waves backwards and forwards.

The gang of convicts, wet through and shivering, came slowly up to the river's bank and stopped to wait for the ferry-boat.

The dark wet ferry-boat arrived; the guards began to find places for the convicts.

"They say there is vodka to be had on this ferry-boat," observed one of the convicts, when the ferry-boat, covered with large flakes of wet snow, had put off from the bank and was rocking on the waves of the rough river.

"Yes, it would be a good thing to have a drop now," said Sergei, and persecuting Katerina Lvovna for Sonetka's amusement, he continued: "Well now, merchant's wife, for old friendship's sake treat us to some vodka. Don't be stingy. Remember, my ungracious one, our former love, how you and I, my joy, loved each other, how we passed long autumn nights together, and sent your relations in secret, without priest or deacon, to their eternal rest."

Katerina Lvovna was shivering with cold. Besides the cold that pierced through her wet clothes to the very bones, something more was going on in Katerina Lvovna. Her head was burning like fire; the dilated pupils of her eyes shone brightly, her eyes wandered wildly round, or looking before her, rested immovable on the rolling waves.

"Yes, I would gladly drink some vodka. I can bear it no longer," Sonetka chimed in.

"Merchant's wife, won't you stand us a drink?" Sergei continued to annoy her.

"Where's your conscience?" said Fiona, shaking her head reproachfully.

"It's no honour to yourself to have such a conscience," said the convict Gorushek in support of the soldier's wife.

"If you're not ashamed before her, ye might be ashamed for her, before others."

"Get along, you worldly old snuff-box," shouted Sergei at Fiona. "Ashamed indeed! What have I to be ashamed of! Perhaps I never loved her. . . . and now Sonetka's worn-out boot is worth more to me than her phiz—the draggle-tailed cat! What can you canswer to that? Let her love crooked-mouthed Gorushek or else"—he looked round at the guard who was sitting on his horse wrapped up in his burka and military cap with its cocade, and added—"better still, let her make up to the guard. Under his burka she would at least not get wet when it rains."

"And all would call her the officer's lady," tittered Sonetka.

"Of course it would be a trifle then to get stockings," continued Sergei.

Katerina Lvovna did not defend herself: she only looked more fixedly at the waves and her lips moved. Between Sergei's base talk she heard the roar and sighing of the rising and breaking waves. Suddenly out of one broken billow she saw the blue head of Boris Timofeich appear, from another her husband looked out, and rolled about embracing Fedia's drooping head. Katerina Lvovna tried to remember a prayer and moved her lips, but her lips only whispered: "How you and I loved each other; sat long autumn nights together; sent people from the light of day by violent deaths."

Katerina Lvovna shuddered. Her wandering gaze became fixed and grew wild. Once or twice her arms stretched out into space aimlessly, and then fell down again. Another minute—she rocked about, not taking her eyes off the dark waves, bent forwards, seized Sonetka by the legs and with one bound threw herself and her overboard.

All were petrified with amazement.

Katerina Lvovna appeared on the top of a wave, and again dived under; another wave brought Sonetka in view.

"A boat-hook, throw them a boat-hook!" they shouted on the ferry.

A heavy boat-hook attached to a long rope was thrown over-board and fell into the water. Sonetka again was lost to sight. In two seconds the rapid current carried her away from the ferry and she again raised her arms, but at the same moment Katerina Lvovna rose from another wave, almost to the waist above the water, and threw herself on Sonetka like a strong pike on a soft-finned minnow, and neither appeared again.

THE TOUPEE ARTIST

A STORY TOLD ON A GRAVE

IN SACRED MEMORY OF THE BLESSED DAY,
THE 19TH FEBRUARY, 1861*

*The date of the emancipation of the serfs.

I

THERE are many people in our country, who think that only painters and sculptors are "artists," and indeed only those who have been found worthy of that title by the Academies—no others will they admit to be artists at all. For many Sazikov and Ovchinnikov are nothing more than silver-smiths. Other peoples think differently: Heine mentions a tailor who "was an artist" and "had ideas," and ladies' dresses made by Worth are even now spoken of as "artistic creations." It was recently written about one of these dresses, that it "concentrated a world of imagination in the point of the bodice."

In America the domain of art is considered still wider. The celebrated American author, Bret Harte, tells of an artist, who was greatly renowned among them for "working on the dead." He imparted to the faces of the deceased various consoling expressions testifying to the more or less happy state of their departed souls.

There were several grades of this art. I remember three: (1), calmness; (2), exalted contem-

plation; and (3), the beatitude of the direct intercourse with God. The fame of the artist corresponded to the great perfection of his work, that is to say it was immense, but unfortunately the artist himself perished, falling a victim to the coarse mob, who set no value on the freedom of artistic creation. He was stoned to death because he had communicated the expression of the "beatific intercourse with God" to the face of a deceased defaulting banker who had swindled the whole town. The happy heirs of this scoundrel had hoped to show their gratitude to their late relative by giving this order, but the artistic executor thereof paid for it with his life. . .

In Russia we too had a master of a similarly unusual artistic nature.

II

MY younger brother had as nurse a tall, thin, but very fine old woman, who was called Lyubov Onisimovna. She had once been an actress of the former Orel Theatre belonging to Count Kamensky, and all I am about to relate happened in Orel during the days of my childhood.

My brother is seven years younger than I am, so that when he was two years old, and in Lyubov Onisimovna's arms, I had just completed my ninth year and was quite able to understand the stories that were told me.

Lyubov Onisimovna was at that time not very old, but she was as white as the moon. Her features were fine and delicate, her tall figure was erect and as wonderfully well-proportioned as a young girl's.

My mother and aunt looking at her often said she must have been a beauty in her day.

She was honesty and kindness itself, and very sentimental; she loved the tragic side of life but . . . sometimes drank.

She used to take us for walks in the Trinity

Cemetery, where, sitting down on a common grave with an old wooden cross, she would relate to me some story.

It was here that I heard the history of the Toupee Artist.

III

HE was our nurse's colleague in the theatre; the difference was only that she "acted on the stage and danced dances," while he was the "Toupee Artist," that is, the hairdresser and maker-up, who painted and dressed the hair of all the Count's serf actresses. But he was no ordinary commonplace barber, with a hairdresser's comb behind his ear, and a tin pot of rouge and tallow; he was a man with ideas—in a word, an artist.

According to Lyubov Onisimovna's words no one could "make imagination in a face" better than he.

I am unable to say exactly at the time of which Count Kamensky these two artistic natures flourished. Three Counts Kamensky are known, and they were all called by the old inhabitants of Orel: "Unparalleled tyrants." Field-marshal Michail Fedotovich was killed by his serfs for his cruelty in the year 1809, and he had two sons, Nickolai, who died in 1811, and Sergei, who died in 1835.

I was a child in the forties, but can still remember a huge wooden building with imitation windows

painted with soot and ochre, surrounded by an extremely long half-ruined fence. This was the sinister residence of Count Kamensky; and here, too, was his theatre. The property was situated in such a position that it was very well seen from the Trinity Cemetery, and, therefore, whenever Lyubov Onisimovna wanted to relate something, she almost always began with these words:

"Look yonder, dear; do you see how terrible it is?"

"Yes, it is terrible, nurse."

"Well, and what I am going to tell you is even more terrible!"

This is one of her stories about the hairdresser Arkadie, a tender and brave young man, who was very dear to her heart.

IV

"ARKADIE dressed the hair and painted the faces of the actresses only. For the men there was another hairdresser, and if Arkadie went to the men's side it was only on occasions, when the Count himself ordered him to paint someone in a very noble manner. The chief speciality of the touch of this artist consisted in 'ideas,' thanks to which he was able to give to faces the finest and most varied expressions."

"He was sometimes sent for and told," said Lyubov Onisimovna, "this face must have such or such an expression." Arkadie would then step back, order the actor or actress to stand or sit before him, while he stood, with arms folded over his breast, looking at them and thinking. And all the time he himself was more beautiful than the handsomest among them, because though of middle height he was indescribably well-proportioned—his little nose was thin and proud; his eyes were kind like an angel's—and a thick curl of his hair hung beautifully over his eyes, so that he appeared to be looking out of a misty cloud."

In a word, the toupee artist was handsome and

" pleased everybody." " Even the Count was fond of him and distinguished him above all others. He clothed him very well, but kept him with the greatest strictness." He would not allow Arkadie to shave or cut and dress the hair of anyone but himself, and, for that reason, always kept him near his dressing-room, and Arkadie was not allowed to go anywhere, except to the theatre.

He was not even allowed to go to church, to confession or to the Holy Communion, because the Count himself did not believe in God, and could not bear the clergy. Once at Easter-time he had set the wolf hounds at the Borisoglebsk priests, who had come to him with the cross.*

The Count, according to Lyubov Onisimovna, was so horribly ugly in consequence of his constant wickedness, that he was like all sorts of animals at the same time. But Arkadie was able to give, even to this bestial visage, though only for a time, such an expression that, when the Count sat of an evening in his box at the theatre, he appeared more imposing than many.

*The occurence narrated above was known to many in Orel. I heard of it from my grandmother Alferiev, and from the merchant Ivan Ivanovich Androsov, who was known for his infallible truthfulness, and had seen the wolf-hounds baiting the priests and had only been able to save himself by " taking sin upon his soul." When the Count had ordered him to be fetched and had asked him : " Are you sorry for them ? " Androsov had answered : " Not at all, your Excellency, they deserve it, it will teach them not to loaf about." For this the Count had spared him.

But in reality what the Count, to his great vexation, chiefly lacked, was an imposing and military expression.

In order that nobody else should have the advantage of the services of such an inimitable artist as Arkadie, "all his life he had to sit at home and never had any money given to him since he was born." Arkadie was at that time twenty-five years of age and Lyubov Onisimovna was nineteen. Of course they were acquainted, and it happened with them, as it often does at their age, that they fell in love with each other. But they were only able to speak of their love in vague hints, spoken too before all, while he was making her up.

Tête-à-tête meetings were quite impossible and could not even be thought of.

"We actresses," said Lyubov Onisimovna, "were taken care of in the same way as wet-nurses are looked after in the houses of illustrious personages: we were in charge of elderly women, who had children of their own, and if, God forbid! anything happened to one of us, those women's children were subjected to the most dreadful tyranny.

"The covenant of virginity could only be broken by 'the master' who had ordained it,"

V

LYUBOV ONISIMOVNA was at that time not only in the full bloom of her maiden beauty, but also at the most interesting point of the development of her many-sided talents: she sang in "The Pot-Pourri Chorus," danced the chief dances in "The Chinese Kitchen Gardener," and feeling a vocation for tragedy, "knew all the parts at first sight."

I do not know for certain in which year it was that the Tzar (I cannot say if it was the Emperor Alexander I or Nikolai I) happened to pass through Orel and remained the night there, and in the evening was expected to come to Count Kamensky's theatre.

The Count invited all the notabilities of the place to come to his theatre (no tickets were sold), and the performance was to be of the best. Lyubov Onisimovna was to sing in "The Pot-Pourri Chorus" and dance in "The Chinese Kitchen-Gardener," when suddenly during the last rehearsal some scenery fell down and crushed the foot of the actress who was to act the part of "The Duchess de-Bourblanc."

I have never heard of nor even come across such a part, but that is just how Lyubov Onisimovna pronounced the name.

The carpenter who had let the scenery fall was sent to the stables to be punished, and the injured actress was carried to her closet, but there was nobody to take the part of the Duchess de Bourblanc."

"Then," said Lyubov Onisimovna, "I offered myself, because the part pleased me very much, especially where the Duchess de Bourblanc begs for forgiveness at her father's feet, and dies with dishevelled hair. I had wonderfully long fair hair, which Arkadie dressed enchantingly."

The Count was delighted with the girl's unexpected offer to take the part, and having received the assurance of the director that "Lyubov would not spoil the part," he said:

"If she spoils it you will have to answer for it withi your back. But now take her the 'aquamarne ear-rings' from me."

The "aquamarine ear-rings" was both a flattering and loathsome present to receive. It was the first mark of having been chosen for the special honour of being elevated, for a short moment, to be the odalisque of the master. Soon after that, or even sometimes at once, an order was given to Arkadie to make up the doomed girl, after the play,

in the innocent guise of St. Cecilia ; and dressed all in white, with a wreath on her head and a lily in her hand, to symbolize innocence, she was conducted to the Count's apartments.

"That," said Nurse, "you cannot understand at your age—but it was the most terrible thing, especially for me, because I was thinking of Arkadie. I began to cry. I threw the ear-rings on the table and wept. I could not even imagine how I would be able to act in the evening."

VI

IN those same fatal hours Arkadie, too, was being beguiled into an equally fatal action.

The Count's brother arrived from his estate to present himself to the Emperor. He was even uglier than the Count. He had lived long in the country and had never put on a uniform or shaved, because " his whole face had grown covered with furrows and protuberances." Now on such a special occasion it was obligatory to appear in uniform, to put one's whole person in order, and produce the military expression that was required for full dress.

And much was required.

" People now do not understand how strict one was in those days," said Nurse. " Formality was observed in every thing then, and there was a form for the faces of important personages as well as for the way their hair was dressed, which was for some terribly unbecoming. If their hair was dressed in the formal way, with a high top-knot and roundlets of curls, the whole face would look like a peasant's balalaika without strings. Important personages

were horribly afraid of this appearance. To avoid it much depended on the masterly way in which the hair was cut, and in which they were shaved—how the space was left between the whiskers and the moustaches and how the curls were formed, and where they were combed out—and from this—from the slightest trifle the whole expression of the face could be changed."

For civilians, according to Nurse, it was not so difficult, because they were not subjected to such close scrutiny. From them only meekness was required, but from the military more was demanded —before their superiors they had to appear meek—but before everybody else they had to look fierce and stern.

"This is just what Arkadie, with his wonderful art, knew how to impart to the Count's ugly and insignificant face."

VII

THE brother from the country was much uglier than the town Count, and besides, in the country, he had become quite "shaggy" and had "let such coarseness find its way into his face," that he himself was conscious of it, but there was nobody who could trim him because being stingy in every way he had sent his own hairdresser to Moscow into service, and even if he had not done so the face of the younger Count was covered with pimples, so that it was impossible to shave him without cutting him all over.

When he arrived in Orel he sent for the town barbers and said to them:

"To the one who can make me look like my brother, the Count Kamensky, I will give two gold pieces, but for him who cuts me, I have placed two pistols here on the table. If it is well done he may take the gold and depart—but if even one little pimple is cut, or if the whiskers are trimmed a hair's-breadth wrong—I will kill him on the spot."

But this was only to frighten them, as the pistols were only charged with blank cartridges.

At that time there were but few barbers in Orel, and even they only went about the public baths with basins applying cups and leeches, and possessed neither taste nor imagination. They knew it and refused to " transform " Kamensky. " The devil take you," they thought, " both you and your gold."

" We can't do what you require," they said, " because we are unworthy to touch such a personage, nor have we the proper razors. We have only common Russian razors, and for your Excellency's face English razors are wanted. It is only the Count's Arkadie who could do it."

The Count ordered the barbers to be kicked out, and they were pleased to have got away so easily. Then he drove to his elder brother's and said :

" Now listen to me, brother ! I have come to ask you a great favour. Lend me your Arkadie before evening, to trim me properly and get me into a presentable condition. It is a long time since I shaved, and your town barbers don't know how to do it."

The Count answered his brother :

" The town barbers are naturally not worth anything. I did not know there were any, because even my dogs are shorn by my own hairdressers. As for your request, you are asking me for an impossibility, for I have sworn, that as long as I live, Arkadie shall

not dress anybody but me. Do you think I can break my word before my own slaves ? "

The other answered :

" Why not ? You have laid down the law, you may change it."

The Count, our master, replied that for him such reasoning was strange.

" If I began to act in that way, I should never be able to demand anything more from my people. Arkadie has been told, that such is my decree, and all know it, and for that reason he is better kept than the others, but if he ever dare to apply his art to anybody but me—I will have him thrashed to death and send him as a soldier."

" One or the other," his brother said. " Either thrash him to death or send him as a soldier ; you can't do both."

" Very well," answered the Count, let it be as you wish. He shall not be thrashed to death, but almost to death, and then he shall be sent as a soldier."

" Is that your last word, brother ? "

" Yes, that is my last word."

" Is this the only reason ? "

" Yes, the only one."

" Well, in that case it is all right. I was beginning to think that your brother was worth less to you than a village serf. You need not break your word,

simply send Arkadie to me to shave my poodle. Once there it will be my affair to see what he does."

It was awkward for the Count to refuse this.

"Very well," he said, "I will send him to shave the poodle."

"Well, that's all I want."

He pressed the Count's hand and drove away.

VIII

IT was at the hour of twilight before the winter evening had set in, when they were lighting up, that the Count summoned Arkadie and said :

" Go to my brother's house and shave his poodle."

" Is that all I shall have to do ? " asked Arkadie.

" Nothing more," said the Count, " but return quickly to dress the hair of the actresses. Lyubov must be made up for three different parts, and after the performance, present her to me as St. Cecilia."

Arkadie staggered.

" What is the matter with you ? " the Count asked.

" Pardon me," Arkadie answered, " I slipped on the carpet."

" Take care," remarked the Count, " that bodes no good ! "

But to Arkadie's sinking heart it was all the same if the omen were good or bad.

After the order to adorn me as St. Cecilia was given, he could hear and see nothing ; he took up his leather case of implements and went out.

IX

HE came to the Count's brother, who had already had candles lighted at the mirror, and again two pistols were placed side by side, but this time there were not two, but ten gold pieces laid beside them, and the pistols were not charged with blank cartridges but with Circassian bullets.

The Count's brother said :

" I have no poodle, but this is what I require : make my toilet and give me the most audacious mien and you shall receive ten gold pieces, but if you cut me I will kill you."

Arkadie stared before him, and stared at the gold, and then God only knows, what happened to him— he began to shave the Count's brother and trim his hair. In a few moments he had transformed him in his best style, then he slipped the gold into his pocket and said :

" Good-bye ! "

" Go," answered the Count's brother, " but first I would like to know why you are so desperate. Why did you decide to do it ? "

Arkadie answered :

" Why I decided is the profoundest secret of my soul."

" Or perhaps you are charmed against bullets, and therefore are not afraid of pistols."

" Pistols are trifles," answered Arkadie, " I did not even think of them."

" How so ? Is it possible that you dared to think your Count's word is more sacred than mine, and that I would not have shot you if you had cut me ? If you are not charmed, you would have lost your life."

At the mention of the Count, Arkadie staggered again, and said as if half in a dream :

" I am not charmed against bullets, but God has given me sense. Before you had had time to take the pistol in your hand to shoot me, I would have cut your throat with the razor."

With that he rushed out of the house and returned to the theatre, just in time to dress my hair. He was trembling all over. As he arranged each curl he bent over me to blow it into its place, and always whispered the same words in my ear :

" Don't be afraid, I will carry you off."

X

THE performance went off well, because we were all as if made of stone; inured to fear and to suffering: whatever was in our hearts we had to act so that nothing should be noticed.

From the stage we could see the Count and his brother—they looked just alike. When they came behind the scenes it was difficult to distinguish the one from the other. Only our Count was quite quiet, as if he had become kind. He was always so before the greatest ferocity.

We all were stupified and crossed ourselves:

"Lord have mercy, and save us! Upon whom will his brutality fall this time?"

We did not know as yet of Arkadie's mad act of desperation, nor what he had done, but Arkadie himself knew that he would not be pardoned, and he was pale when the Count's brother glanced at him, and mumbled something in a low voice in our Count's ear. But I had very sharp ears, and heard what he said.

"As a brother, I give you this advice: fear him when he is shaving you with a razor!"

Our Count only smiled slightly.

I think that Arkadie heard too, because when he was making me up for the part of the Duchess in the last play he put, as he had never done before, so much powder on me, that the costumier, who was a Frenchman, began to shake it off and said :

" Trop beaucoup, trop beaucoup," and taking a brush he flicked it away.

XI

WHEN the whole performance was over the robe of the Duchess de Bourblanc was taken off and the dress of St. Cecilia was put on me. This was a simple white gown without sleeves, fastened only with little bows on the shoulders ; we could not bear this costume. Well, and then Arkadie came to dress my hair in an innocent fashion, with a thin chaplet surrounding the head, as St. Cecilia is portrayed in pictures, and he saw six men standing outside the door of my closet. This meant, that as soon as he had made me up and returned to the door, he would be seized and taken to be tortured. And the tortures in store for us were such, that it was a hundred times better to be condemned to death. There was the strappado and the cord ; the head-vices and the thumb-screws ; all these and many more. The state punishments were as nothing compared to them. Under the whole of the house there were secret cellars in which living men were kept chained up like bears. When you had to pass near them it sometimes happened that you heard the sounds of

chains and the groans of men in fetters. They probably desired that news of their condition should reach the world, or that the authorities should take their part—but the authorities did not even dare to think of intervening. People were made to suffer long in those cellars; some all their lives. One lay there very long and composed some lines:

> "Serpents will crawl on you and suck out your eyes,
> Scorpions will shed poison over your face."

This verse he would repeat to himself until he had made himself quite terrified.

Others were chained up together with bears in such a way that the man was only one inch out of reach of the bear's claws.

But nothing of this happened to Arkadie Il'ich, because when he rushed back into my closet he seized a table and in a moment had shattered the window—more than this I cannot remember. . . .

When I began to regain my senses, my feet were icy cold. I moved my legs and found that I was wrapped up in a large bear or wolf skin, and around me was complete darkness. The fast horses of the troika* whisked along I knew not whither. Two men were alongside of me, we were all three huddled together in the broad sledge in which we were sitting—one was holding me—that was Arkadie Il'ich, the other was the driver, who hurried the

* Any vehicle drawn by three horses harnessed abreast.

horses on with all his might. The snow flew in clouds from under the horses' hoofs, while the sledge bent over first on one side, and then on the other. If we had not been sitting in the bottom of the sledge holding on with our hands, it would have been impossible to survive.

I heard their anxious talk, as if they expected something. I could only understand:

"They're coming! they're coming! Hurry up! hurry up!" and nothing more.

As soon as Arkadie Il'ich noticed I was conscious he bent over me and said:

"Lyuboshka, my little dove, they are chasing us; are you willing to die, if we cannot get away?"

I answered that I would consent with joy.

He had hoped to reach the Turkish village, Khrushchuk, where many of our people had taken refuge from the Count.

Suddenly we sped across the ice of a river, and then something like a dwelling appeared dimly before us, and dogs began to bark. The driver whipped up his horses, and turned the sledge sharply to one side, so that it tilted over and Arkadie and I were thrown out into the snow, while the driver, the sledge and the horses disappeared from our sight.

"Don't be afraid," Arkadie said, "this might

have been expected, because the Yamshchik* who drove us does not know me, and I do not know him. He agreed to help me carry you off for three gold pieces, but on condition of saving his own skin. Now we are in the hands of God. This is the village of Sukhaya Orlitsa—a bold priest lives here, who marries desperate couples and has buried many of our people. We will make him a present and he will hide us until evening, and marry us too, and in the evening the yamshchik will come for us and we shall steal away."

* The driver of a troika or any post vehicle.

XII

WE knocked at the door and went into the passage. The priest himself opened the door. He was old, of small stature, and had one front tooth missing. His wife, a little old woman, began to blow up the fire. We both fell at his feet.

"Save us, let us warm ourselves, and hide us until evening."

The Reverend Father asked:

"Who are you, my dear children? Have you booty, or are you only fugitives?"

"We have taken nothing from anybody," answered Arkadie, we are fleeing from the brutality of Count Kamensky, and want to go to the Turkish village, Khrushchuk, where many of our people are already living. They will not find us there. We have got our own money, and we will give you a piece of gold for one night's lodging, and if you marry us three pieces of gold. Marry us if you can; if not we can be wedded in Khrushchuk."

"No, no, why can't I marry you?" said the priest? I can do so? What is the good of being

married in Khrushchuk? Give me five pieces of gold altogether—I will marry you here."

Arkadie handed him five gold pieces, and I took the "aquamarine ear-rings" out of my ears and gave them to the priest's wife.

The priest took the gold and said:

"Oh, my dear children, it would be easy. I have bound together all sorts of people, but it is not well that you are the Count's. Though I am a priest, still I fear his brutality. Well, never mind him, what God ordains, will be! Add another piece, or half a one, and hide yourselves."

Arkadie gave him a sixth gold piece, and then he said to his wife:

"Why are you standing there, old woman? Give the fugitive a petticoat and some sort of jacket; one is ashamed to look at her, she is almost naked." Then he wanted to take us to the church and hide us in the trunk among the vestments. The priest's wife took me behind the partition, and was just about to clothe me, when we heard a jingling outside the door and somebody knocked.

XIII

OUR hearts sank within us, and the Reverend Father whispered to Arkadie :

" It is evident, my dear child, you are not to be hidden in the trunk with the vestments. Get quickly under the feather-bed."

And he said to me :

" You, my dear child, get in here," saying which he locked me up in the clock-case, put the key in his pocket and then went to open the door to the new arrivals. One could hear that there were many people outside. Some stood at the door, and two men were already looking in at the windows.

Seven men entered the room, all beaters from the Count's hunt, with their iron balls and straps, long whips in their hands and rope leashes in their girdles. The eighth who followed them was the Count's steward, in a long wolfskin coat and high fur cap.

The clock-case I was hidden in had a grating in front with a thin old muslin curtain behind it, through which I was able to see all that was going on in the room.

The old priest lost courage, perhaps, because he

thought it a bad case. He trembled at sight of the steward, crossed himself and cried hastily :

" Ah, my dear children. Oh, my dear children, I know ; I know what you are looking for, but I am in no way in fault towards the most serene Count, indeed I'm not in fault, in truth I'm not in fault ! "

And each time he crossed himself, he pointed with his finger over his left shoulder at the clock-case in which I was hidden.

" All is lost," I thought, when I saw this extraordinary behaviour.

The stewart noticed this too, and said :

" We know everything. Give me the key of this clock-case."

But the priest only crossed himself all the more.

" Indeed, my children, truly, my dear children. Pardon me, do not punish me ! I have forgotten where I put the key. Verily, I have forgotten ; in truth I have forgotten ! "

And all the time with the other hand he stroked his pocket.

The steward too saw his incredible action, and took the key from the pocket and opened the clock-case.

" Crawl out, my pretty falcon—now I have caught you, your mate will soon appear."

Indeed, Arkadie had already shown himself ; he

had thrown off the priest's feather-bed and stood before us.

" Yes, there is nothing more to be done," said he. " You have won ; you can take me to the torture, but she is in no way to blame. I carried her off by force."

Then he turned to the priest, and all he did was to spit in his face.

" My dear children," said the priest, " do you see how my sacred office and faithfulness are outraged ? Report this to the most serene Count."

The steward answered him :

" Never mind, you need not fear, he will have to answer for all this." And then he ordered Arkadie and me to be led away.

We were all placed in three sledges : in the first Arkadie, with arms and legs bound fast, was seated with the huntsmen, and I with a similar guard was driven off in the last sledge while the rest of the party were in the middle one.

All the people we met made way for us ; perhaps they thought it was a wedding.

XIV

WE soon arrived, and when we entered the Count's yard I lost sight of the sledge in which Arkadie had been brought. I was taken to my former room, and questioned by one after another :

" How long had I been alone with Arkadie ? "

I told every one :

" Oh, not at all ! "

Then I did not escape the fate for which I had probably been destined from my birth ; not with love, but with aversion, and when I came to afterwards, in my little room, and buried my head in the pillow, to weep over my misfortune, I suddenly heard terrible groans under the floor.

We girls lived in the second story of a wooden building, and below there was a large lofty room, where we learned to sing and dance. From thence every sound could be heard in our rooms. The hellish King Satan had suggested the cruel idea that they should torture Arkadie under my room. .

When I realized they were torturing him, I rushed to the door to go to him, but the door was locked.

. . . I don't know what I wanted to do. . . . I fell down . . . on the floor the sounds were still more distinct . . . there was neither a knife nor a nail at hand . . . there was nothing with which to end it. . . I took my own plait, wound it round my neck—wound it round . . . tighter and tighter, till I only heard ringing in my ears and saw circles before my eyes, then everything ceased. . . . When I came to myself again I felt I was in a strange place in a large light hut. There were many calves round me—more than ten—such caressing little calves ; they came up and licked me with their cool tongues—they thought they were sucking their mother—I awoke because they tickled. I looked round and thought, " Where am I ? " Then I saw a woman come into the room, a tall, elderly woman dressed in striped blue linen with a striped linen kerchief on her head. She had a kind face.

The woman noticed I had come to my senses and began caressing me and told me I was still on the Count's estate, but in the calves' house.

" It was there," explained Lyubov Onisimovna, pointing with her hand to the very furthest corner of the grey half-ruined fence.

XV

HER appearance in the farmyard was due to the suspicion that, perhaps, she was out of her mind. Such people, who were regarded as cattle, were sent to the farmyard to be observed, because the cow-herds and dairy-maids, being elderly and sedate people, it was thought, could best watch over mental diseases.

The old woman in the striped linen dress whom Lyubov Onisimovna first saw on her awakening, was very kind, and was called Drosida.

"In the evening, when she had finished her work," Nurse continued, "she made up a bed for me of fresh oaten straw. She spread it out so well, that it was as soft as a feather-bed, and then she said: 'My girl, I will explain everything to you. Whatever may have happened you can tell me. I, too, am like you, and have not worn this striped dress all my days, but have also known another life, though, God forbid I should think of it now. All I say is, don't break your heart because you have been banished to the cattle-yard; it is better in banishment—only avoid this terrible flagon. . .'"

And she took out of the kerchief she wore round

her neck, and over her bosom, a small white glass phial and showed it me.

"What is it?" I asked.

"This is a terrible flagon," she answered, "and the poison of forgetfulness is in it."

"Give me the poison of forgetfulness," I said, "I want to forget everything."

"Don't drink—it is vodka," she said. "Once I lost command of myself and drank—good people gave it to me. . . . Now I can't help it—I must have it. Don't drink as long as you can help it; and don't judge me that I take a sip—I am in great pain. You have still a comfort in the world. The Lord has released him from tyranny!"

"He is dead!" I shrieked, clutching hold of my hair, and I saw it was not my hair—it was white. "What does this mean?"

"Don't be afraid, don't be afraid," she said, "your head had become white already there; when they released your neck from the plait. He is alive and saved from all further tyranny. The Count showed him such mercy as nobody had known before. When night comes I shall tell you all; but now I must take a sip—I must take a sip to stop this burning—this heart-ache."

And she sipped and sipped and at last went to sleep.

At night, when all were sleeping, Aunt Drosida again got up, went to the window in the dark, and

I saw her standing there, sipping at her flagon, and then she hid it once more and asked in a whisper :

" Does grief sleep or not ? "

" Grief does not sleep," I answered.

Then she came to my bed and told me that the Count had sent for Arkadie after his punishment and said :

" You ought to have suffered all that I had threatened, but as you were my favourite, I will now show you mercy. To-morrow I shall send you to be a soldier, as supernumerary, but as you were not afraid of the noble count, my brother, with his pistols, I shall open the path of honour for you. I do not wish you to be lower than your noble spirit deserves. I will write a letter asking that you should be sent at once to the war. You will not have to serve as a private soldier, but as a regimental sergeant—so show your courage. From this time you are no longer subject to my will, but to the Tzar's."

" He is better off now," said the old woman, " he need not fear anything ; he has only one authority over him ; he need only fear falling in battle, and not the master's tyranny."

I believed her, and for three years dreamed every night of Arkadie fighting.

In this way three years passed. God was merciful to me. I was not recalled to the theatre, but I

remained all the time living in the calves' hut as Aunt Drosida's assistant. I was very happy there, because I was sorry for this woman, and when, at night, she had not had too much to drink, I liked to listen to her. She could remember how the old Count had been slaughtered by our people—and his own valet was the chief instigator—as nobody could endure his hellish cruelty any more. All this time I didn't drink and did much work for Aunt Drosida, and with pleasure too ; the young cattle were like my children. I became so attached to the calves that when they had been fattened up and were taken away to be slaughtered for the table, I would make the sign of the cross over them, and for three days after could not cease crying. I was no longer of any use for the theatre because my legs refused to work properly ; I began to be shaky on them. Formerly my gait was of the lightest, but now, ever since Arkadie Il'ich had carried me off senseless in the cold, where I must have frozen them, I had no longer any strength in the toes for dancing. I became the same sort of woman in striped linen that Drosida was. God only knows how long I would have lived on in this melancholy way if something had not happened. One evening, when I was sitting in my hut, just before sunset, looking out of the window at the calves, suddenly a small stone fell into the room through the window. The stone was wrapped up in paper.

XVI

I LOOKED around, to one side and to the other, and out of the window—nobody was to be seen. "Some one has thrown it over the fence," I thought, "and it did not go where he wanted, but has fallen into our room." Then I thought: "Shall I undo this paper or not? Perhaps it is better to unwrap it, because something is sure to be written on it. And it is sure to be something that somebody requires. I may be able to find it out and keep the secret, but I will throw the note with the stone in the same way to the person it concerns."

I unwrapped it and began to read—I could not believe my own eyes.

XVII

THE letter ran thus :

"My Faithful Lyubu !

"I have fought for the Tzar. I have shed my blood more than once, and have therefore been made an officer and gained honourable rank. Now I have come on leave to recover from my wounds, and am staying in the inn of the Pushkarsky suburb, with the innkeeper. To-morrow I shall put on my decorations and crosses and appear before the Count, with all the money I was given to continue my cure : five hundred roubles, and I shall ask to be allowed to ransom you for myself, in the hope of being married at the altar of the Most High Creator."

"And then," continued Lyubov Onisimovna, with suppressed emotion, "he wrote : 'Whatever misery you have gone through, and whatever you may have had to submit to, I will look upon as your affliction, and not as sin, nor do I consider it as weakness, but leave it to God, and I have only feelings of respect for you.' It was signed Arkadie Il'ich."

Lyubov Onisimovna burnt the letter to ashes at once, and told nobody about it, not even the old woman, but prayed to God the whole night, not saying many words about herself, but always about him, because she said, "although he had written, that he was now an officer with decorations and wounds, I was still unable to imagine that the Count would behave to him any differently from before. I might even say, I feared he would beat him again."

XVIII

EARLY next morning Lyubov Onisimovna took the calves out into the sun and began feeding them out of a trough with crusts and milk, when suddenly sounds reached her from outside, that people "in freedom" were hurrying somewhere; they were running and talking quickly to each other.

"I could not distinguish a word of what they were saying," she continued, "but their words seemed to pierce my heart like a knife. When our labourer, Filip, who was carting dung, came into the yard, I said to him:

"Filipushka batushka (little father), have you heard where all the people are going and what they are about, talking so curiously to each other?"

"They are going," he said, "to see the officer whose throat was cut while he slept by the innkeeper of the Pushkarsky Inn. They say that his throat was cut quite through," he said, "and five hundred roubles were stolen from him. The innkeeper was caught all bloody," they say, "and the money was on him."

And as he told me this I felt my legs give way.

It was quite true: that innkeeper had cut Arkadie Il'ich's throat . . . and he was buried here . . . in this very grave on which we are sitting. . . . And there he is now beneath us . . . he is lying under this mound. . . You may have wondered why I always come here in our walks. . . I don't want to look there (she pointed to the dark grey ruins), but to sit here near him and . . . and drink a drop for the good of his soul. . . .

XIX

HERE Lyubov Onisimovna paused and considering her story finished, took the little flagon out of her pocket and either "drank to his memory" or "took a sip," but I asked her:

"Who buried the famous artist here?"

"The Governor, my little dove, the Governor himself came to the funeral. Yes, indeed. He was an officer! At the funeral the deacon and the reverend father called him the 'boyard Arkadie,' and when the coffin was lowered into the grave the soldiers fired blank shots into the air. A year later in the market-place of Il'inka the innkeeper was punished with the knout by the executioner. He received forty-three strokes of the knout for Arkadie Il'ich and bore it—he remained alive, was branded, and sent to penal servitude. All our people who were able went to see it, but the old men, who could remember how the man was punished for the cruel Count, said that these forty-three lashes were so little because Arkadie was of the common people, and that for the Count the other

man received a hundred and one lashes. By law, you know, an even number of blows cannot be given, but it must always be an uneven number. The executioner from Tula was fetched on purpose then, and before the work he was given three tumblers of rum. Then he beat him so that the hundred strokes were only for torture, and the man remained alive, but the hundredth and first lash shattered his back-bone. When he was lifted up from the boards he was already dying. . . . They covered him with a mat, and took him to the prison, but he died on the way. And the Tula executioner, they say, still continued to shout: 'Give me another. . . . Let me kill all you Orel fellows!'"

"Well, and you yourself?" I asked; "did you go to the funeral?"

"Yes, I went. I went with all the others. The Count ordered that all from the theatre should be taken there, to see how one of our people could be worthy of so much honour."

"Did you take leave of him?"

"Yes, certainly. All approached and took leave of him, and I . . . he was changed . . . so much changed . . . I would not have known him . . . thin and very pale . . . they said that all the blood had run out, because his throat had been cut at about midnight. . . . Ah, the blood that he shed!"

She sat silent and pensive.

" And you yourself," I asked, " what happened to you ? "

She seemed to recover her senses and passed her hand over her brow.

" I can't remember what happened at first," she answered, " or how I went home. With all the others, of course . . . somebody must have led me . . . and in the evening Drosida Petrovna said :

" ' Now this mustn't be—you don't sleep, and at the same time you lie there as if made of stone. That's not right—cry—there must be relief—your heart must have relief.'

" ' I can't, Auntie,' I said, ' my heart burns like a live coal, and there is no relief.'

" ' Well,' she said, ' then the flagon can't be avoided.'

" She filled a glass out of her bottle for me."

" ' Till now I did not allow you to have it, and dissuaded you, but now it can't be avoided. Pour it on the coal—take a sip.' "

" ' I don't want to,' I said.

" ' Little fool ! Who wants it at first. It is bitter—bitter. But the poison of sorrow is more bitter. The coal must be drenched with this poison—it will be slaked for a moment—sip, sip quickly.' "

" I emptied the whole flagon. It was disgusting, but I could not sleep without it, and the next night again . . . I drank . . . and now I can't go to sleep without it . . . I got my own flagon and buy vodka. . . . You are a good boy, you will never tell mother about it, you must never betray poor people, because one must take care of poor people ; poor people are all sufferers. On the way home I shall go round the corner to the dram-shop, and knock at the window. We shall not go into it, but I shall give my empty flagon, and they will shove me out a new one."

I was touched and promised that I would tell no one, on any account, of her flagon.

" Thank you, little dove, never tell anyone ; it is necessary for me."

I can see her, and hear her, as if she were before me even now. Every night, when all were asleep, she would rise from her bed, so quietly that not even a bone cracked ; she would listen, then creep on her long frozen legs to the window. There she would stand for a minute looking round, listening to see if mother were not coming from her bedroom, then she tapped the neck of the flagon gently on her teeth, put it to her mouth and sipped . . . one drop, another and another. Was it coal that was being drenched ? or Arkadie's memory commemorated ? Then she returned to her bed, slipped

under the bed-clothes, and soon she began to wheeze—gently, very gently—fu-fu, fu-fu, fu-fu—and fell asleep.

A more terrible and soul-harrowing commemoration of the dead, I have never seen in all my life.

ON THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

I

EARLY one evening, during the Christmas holidays, we were sitting at tea in the large blue drawing-room of the episcopal palace. There were seven guests; the eighth was our host, a very aged archbishop, who was both sickly and infirm. All were highly educated men, and the conversation turned on the subject of our faith and our scepticism, of the preaching in our churches, and of the enlightening labours of our missionaries in the East. One of the guests, a certain captain B., of the Navy, who was a very kind-hearted man, but a great antagonist of the Russian clergy, maintained that our missionaries were quite unfit for their work, and was delighted that the government had now permitted foreign evangelical pastors to labour in the propagation of the Gospel. B. asserted his firm conviction that these preachers would have great success, not only among the Jews, but everywhere, and would prove, as surely as two and two make four, the incapacity of the Russian clergy for missionary work.

Our respected host had remained profoundly silent during this conversation; he sat in his large arm-chair, with a plaid over his legs, and seemed to be thinking of quite other things, but when B. ceased speaking the old ecclesiastic sighed and said:

"It appears to me, gentlemen, that you are wrong in controverting the Captain's opinion. I think he is right: the foreign missionaries will certainly have great success here in Russia."

"I am very happy, Vladyko,* that you share my opinion," answered Captain B., and after paying several becoming and delicate compliments to the Archbishop on his well-known intelligence, culture, and nobility of character, he continued:

"Your Eminence knows better than I do the defects of the Russian Church; there are, of course, many wise and good men to be found among the clergy—I do not wish to contest this—but they scarcely understand Christ. Their position—and other reasons—obliges them to explain everything in too narrow a manner . . . ."

The Archbishop looked at him, smiled and answered:

"Yes, Captain, my modesty would not be offended if I admit that perhaps I know the

* Vladyko is the form of address for bishops and other dignitaries of the church.

sorrows of the Church no less than you do, but justice would be offended if I decided to agree with you that in Russia our Lord Christ is understood less well than in Tübingen, London, or Geneva."

"About that, Vladyko, one can argue too."

The Archbishop smiled again and said:

"I see you are fond of arguing. What are we to do with you? We can talk, but avoid argument."

With these words he took from the table a large album, richly bound and ornamented with carved ivory, and opening it, said:

"Here is our Lord. Come and see. I have collected in this book many representations of His face. Here He is sitting at the well with the Woman of Samaria—the workmanship is wonderful; it is evident that the artist understood the face and the moment."

"Yes, Vladyko, I also think it is executed with understanding," answered B.

"But is there not here in this Godly face too much softness? Does it not appear to you, that He is too indifferent as to how many husbands this woman has had, and does not mind that her present husband is not her husband?"

All remained silent; the Archbishop noticed this and continued:

"I think that here a little more seriousness in the expression would not have been amiss."

"You are perhaps right, Vladyko."

"It is a very popular picture. I have seen it often, especially amongst ladies. Let us go on. Another great master. Here Christ is portrayed kissing Judas. What do you say to our Lord's face in this picture? What restraint and goodness! Is it not so? A beautiful picture!"

"A beautiful face."

"Still, is there not here too much *effort* at restraint? Look, the left cheek appears to me to tremble, and on the lips there seems disgust!"

"Certainly there is, Vladyko."

"Oh, yes, but Judas did not deserve it; he was a slave, and a flatterer—he could easily have produced such a feeling in everybody else—but certainly not in Christ, who was never fastidious, and was sorry for all. Well, we will pass on; this one does not quite satisfy us I think, although I know a great dignitary, who told me that he could not imagine a more successful representation of Christ than this picture. Here we have Christ again—and from the brush of a great master, too—Titian. The wily Pharisee with a denarius is standing before the Lord. Look what an artful old man, but Christ . . . Christ . . . Oh! I am afraid! Look, is there not disdain on His face?"

"There might have been at the moment, Vladyko."

"Yes—there might—I do not deny it; the old man is vile, but I, when I pray, do not imagine the Lord thus, and think it would be unseemly. Is it not so?"

We answered that it would and agreed that to imagine the face of Christ with such an expression would be unseemly, especially when addressing prayers to Him.

"I quite agree with you in this and it recalls to my memory a dispute I once had on this very subject with a certain diplomatist, who only liked this Christ; but of course the occasion was a diplomatic one. Let us go on. After this one you see, I have pictures of the Lord where He is alone without any neighbours. Here you have a reproduction of the beautiful head done by the sculptor Cauer. Good, very good. That cannot be denied. What do you think? And yet this academic head reminds me much less of Christ than of Plato. Here He is again, the sufferer. What a terrible expression Metsu has given him; I cannot understand why he has portrayed him beaten, thrashed and bleeding. It is certainly terrible! Swollen eye-lids, blood stains, bruises. . . . . It appears as if the very soul had been beaten out of Him, and to gaze only on a suffering

body is too terrible. Let us turn the page quickly. He inspires sympathy and nothing more. Here we have Lafond, perhaps an insignificant artist, but much appreciated at present; as you see, he has understood Christ differently from all the preceding artists, and has represented Him differently, for himself and for us. The figure is well proportioned and attractive. The face is serene and dovelike. He looks out from under pure brows, and how easily the hair seems to stir; here are curls; there the locks seem to have fluttered and rested on the forehead. Beautiful, is it not? And in His hand there is a flaming heart, surrounded by a thorny wreath. This is the 'Sacré Cœur,' that the Jesuit Fathers preach about. Somebody told me it was they who had inspired M. Lafond to paint this image; however, it also pleases those who think they have nothing in common with the Jesuit Fathers. I remember once on a hard, frosty day, I happened to call on a Russian Prince in Petersburg, who showed me the wonders of his mansion, and it was there in his winter-garden—not quite in the right setting—that I saw this image of Christ for the first time. The picture in its frame stood on a table, before which the Princess was seated, lost in thought. The surroundings were beautiful: palms, arums, banana-plants, warbling and fluttering birds, and

she was lost in thought. About what? She said to me she was seeking Christ. It was then that I was able to examine this portrait. Look how effectively He really stands out, or it would be better to say emerges from this darkness; there is nothing behind him: not even the conventional prophets who have wearied all by their importunity, and are running in their rags after the imperial chariot, and catching hold of it. There is nothing of this—only darkness . . . . a world of imagination. This lady—may God accord her health—was the first to unfold to me the secret of how to find Christ; after which I do not dispute with the Captain that the foreign preachers will not only show Him to the Jews, but to all who wish Him to come under the palms and banana plants to listen to the singing of canaries. But will He come there? May it not be some other who will come to them in His guise? I must own to you, I would willingly exchange this elegant Christ surrounded by canaries for this other Jewish head of Guercino's, although it too only has to me the appearance of a good and enthusiastic rabbi, according to the description of M. Renan, whom one could love and listen to with pleasure . . . . You see how many different ways there are of understanding and portraying Him, Who is our only need. Let us now close the book

and turn to the corner behind your backs: there again we have the image of Christ—but this time it is indeed not a face but a real image. Here we have the typical Russian representation of our Lord: the gaze is straight and simple, the forehead is high, which, as you know, even according to Lavater's system, denotes the capacity for elevated worship of God; the face has expression, but no passion. How did our old masters attain such charm of representation? That has remained the secret, which died with them and their rejected art. Simplicity—nothing more simple could be wished for in art. The features are only slightly marked, but the effect is complete. He is somewhat rustic, certainly, but for all that inspires adoration. I do not know what others feel, but for me our simple old master understood better than all others, Whom he was painting. He is rustic, I repeat, and He will not be invited into the conservatory to listen to the singing of canaries, but what of that? In each land as He revealed Himself, so He will walk; to us He entered in the guise of a slave, and as such He walks among us, not finding where to lay His head, from Petersburg to Kamchatka. It is evident, in our country it pleases Him to accept disgrace from those who drink His blood, and at the same time shed it. And thus, in the

same measure as our national art has understood how to portray the outward features of Christ more simply and successfully, so, to my mind, our national spirit has perhaps also attained nearer to the true understanding of His inner character. Would you like me to relate to you an experience which perhaps is not devoid of interest, bearing on this subject ? "

" Ah, please relate it, Vladyko ; we all beg you to do so."

" Ah, you beg me. Very well, then, I beg you to listen, and not to interrupt my story which I am going to tell somewhat in detail."

We cleared our throats, settled ourselves comfortably in our chairs, so as not to interrupt by moving, and the Archbishop began.

II

GENTLEMEN, we must transport ourselves in imagination many years back; it was at the time when I, still a comparatively young man, was appointed as bishop, to a very distant Siberian diocese. I was by nature of an ardent temperament, and loved to have much work to do; I was, therefore, not sorry but actually very pleased to receive this distant appointment. Thank God, I thought, that for the beginning I have not merely been nominated to cut the hair of the candidates for Holy Orders, or to settle the quarrels of drunken deacons, but have been given real live work to do, which can be accomplished with love. I meant by this our not very successful missionary labours, to which the Captain alluded this evening, at the commencement of our conversation. I journeyed to my new diocese with zealous enthusiasm, and with the most extensive plans, but all my ardour was suddenly cooled, and what is more important, my whole mission would have been rendered unsuccessful, if a marvellous event had not given me a salutary lesson.

"A marvellous event!" exclaimed one of his hearers, forgetting the Archbishop's request not to interrupt the narrative, but our indulgent host was not angered at this, but only answered:

"Yes, gentlemen, the word slipped from my lips, and I need not take it back; the thing that happened to me and which I am about to relate to you, was certainly marvellous, and the marvels began to show themselves to me almost from the first day of my sojourn in my half-savage diocese. The first thing a Russian bishop does on entering on the work of his new bishopric, wherever it may be, is, of course, to inspect the condition of the churches and to see how the services are conducted. I, too, did this. I gave orders that the extra books and crosses should be removed from the altars of all the churches—there are often so many, that the altars in our churches look more like exhibitions of church furniture in shops than altars. I ordered as many round carpets as were needed, and had them laid down in the proper places, so that they should not be whisked about before my nose, and thrown down under my feet when required. With difficulty, and after threatening them with fines and punishments, I at last stopped the deacons from seizing hold of my elbows while I was officiating, and from ascending the altar steps and standing beside me, and above all

I made them cease cuffing and pinching the necks of the poor ordinands, who often suffered much pain in those regions, for more than a fortnight after receiving these blessings of the Holy Ghost. None of you will believe how much trouble all this occasioned me, and what an amount of vexation was caused to an impatient man, such as I was then, and to my shame, I must confess, am still. Having accomplished this, I had to begin the second episcopal task, a work of the greatest importance, to assure myself that the clergy knew how to read, if not written characters, at least printed books. This examination took a long time, and often caused me great annoyance, but sometimes also amusement. A deacon or sacristan who is illiterate, or one who could read but not write, is, perhaps, even still to be found in villages or in small provincial towns in the interior of Russia, as was proved some few years ago, when for the first time they had to give a receipt when their salaries were paid out to them; but in those days, especially in Siberia, it was a most common occurrence. I ordered them to be taught. They, of course, complained bitterly and said I was tyrannical; the parishoners complained that there were no lectors, and said the bishop was ruining the Church. What was to be done? I began to send, in place of such deacons, those who were able

at least to read 'by heart'—and, good Lord!—what people I saw! Lame men, stutterers, men with squints, men who spoke through their noses; some were crazy and some were even possessed. There was one who instead of saying, "Come, let us bow down before the Lord, our God," shut his eyes like a quail and mumbled, "Co-do-be-lo-go, Co-do-be-lo-go," and was so engrossed in it, that it was difficult to stop him. Another—and this one was really possessed—became so absorbed by the rapidity of his own reading, that when he came to certain words, which brought to his mind an association of ideas, he seemed forced to succumb to it. Such words were among others, "in heaven." He would begin to read, "As it was in the beginning, in every hour, in heaven," and suddenly something would snap in his head and he continued, "hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come." No matter what trouble I gave myself with this blockhead it was all in vain. I ordered him to read what was in the book—he would read, "As it was in the beginning, in every hour in heaven," and then, suddenly shutting the book, would continue, "hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come," and mumble on to the end, till he pronounced in a loud voice, "but deliver us from the evil one." Only here he was able to stop; it turned out that he could not read at all. After

seeing that the deacons were able to read, I had to look into the morals of the seminarists; here again I made marvellous discoveries. The seminary was greatly demoralized; the pupils were addicted to drink, and were so indecorous that, for example: one of the students of the faculty of philosophy finished the evening prayer in the presence of the inspector thus: "My hope is the Father, my refuge the Son, my protection the Holy Ghost: Holy Trinity—my compliments to you." In the faculty of theology this is what occurred. After dinner the student, who had to say grace, said: "As Thou hast satisfied me with the blessings of this earth, do not deprive me of the Heavenly Kingdom," and another called to him from among the crowd of students: "You pig, first you overeat yourself and then you ask to be taken into the Heavenly Kingdom."

It was necessary as soon as possible to find a suitable principal, who would act according to my ideas, who was also a tyrant like myself; the time was short, and the choice limited, but I found one at last: he proved to be tyrannical enough, but beyond that you could ask for nothing of him.

"I will take the whole matter up in a military manner, most reverend Father," said he, "so as at once . . . ."

"Very well," I answered, "take the matter up in a military way."

And he did so. The first order he gave was: that the prayers were not to be read but sung in chorus, so as to avoid all mischievous tricks, and that the singing should be led by him. When he entered, all were silent and remained without uttering a sound until he gave the order, "prayer!" and began to sing. But all this he did in a manner that was almost too military. He would give the order, "pray-er!" Then the seminarists began singing: "Our eyes, O Lord, are turned to Thee." In the middle of a word he would shout "Stop," and call one of them to him.

"Frolov, come here!"

He approached.

"You are Bagréev?"

"No, sir, I am Frolov."

"Ah, ah! so you are Frolov? Why did I think that you were Bagréev?"

Then there was again laughter, and again complaints were made to me. No, I saw—this military system did not answer, and at last after much difficulty I found a civilian who, though not so tyrannical, acted with more wisdom: before the scholars he pretended to be the weakest of good-natured fellows, but always calumniated me, and related everywhere the horrors of my

tyranny. I knew this, but noticing that this measure proved efficacious, did not object to his system.

I had hardly, by my tyranny, brought the seminary into subjection when miracles began to occur among the adults. One day I was informed that a load of hay had been driven into the inside of the Arch-presbyter of the Cathedral, and could not get out again. I sent to find out what had really happened. They said it was quite true. The Arch-priest was very corpulent; after the liturgy, he had gone to christen a child in a merchant's house, where he had filled himself plentifully with the good viands set before him, from which cause, or owing to another fruit—a wild one—he had found there, and partaken of not less plenteously; deep and stupid intoxication had resulted. This was not enough He went home, lay down and slept for four hours, rose and drank a mug of kvass,* and lay down again with his breast to the window, to talk to somebody standing below—when suddenly a cart-load of hay drove into him. All this was so stupid that one could not help being disgusted, but when I heard the end of the story, I was, perhaps, even more disgusted. The next morning the lay-brother brought me my boots and said, "Thank God, the cart

*A sort of light beer.

of hay has already been driven out of the Father Arch-presbyter."

"I am very pleased," I said, "to hear such good news, but tell me the story more fully."

It appeared that the Arch-priest, who owned a two-storeyed house, had lain down, when he came home at a window under which there was a gate-way, and at that very moment a cartload of hay had driven into it, and he, in his fuzzled sleepy state, imagined that it had driven into his inside. It is incredible, nevertheless it was so; "credo, quia absurdum."

How was this miracle-worker saved?

Also by a miracle—he would not consent to rise on any account, because he had a cartload of hay in his inside. The physician could find no remedy for this malady. Then a sorceress was called in. She twisted and turned about, tapped him here and there, and ordered a cart to be loaded with hay and driven out of the yard; the sick man imagined it had emerged from his inside, and recovered.

Well, after this you could do what you liked for him; but he had done for himself: he had amused the good people, he had summoned a sorceress and had profited by her idolatrous enchantments. Here such things could not be hidden under a bushel, but were proclaimed on

the highways : " Those are fine priests—they are no good. They themselves send for our sorcerers to drive away ' shaytan.' "* There was no end to the nonsensical talk. For a time long I trimmed these smoking icon lamps, as well as I could, and my parochial duties were rendered unbearably wearisome to me by them, but at last the long awaited and long desired moment arrived, when I could devote myself entirely to the work of enlightening the wild sheep of my flock, that were grazing without a shepherd.

I collected all the documents relating to this question, and began to study them so diligently that I scarcely ever left my writing-table.

* Satan.

III

WHEN I became acquainted with all the accounts of the missionaries work, I was even more dissatisfied with their activity than I was with the work of my diocesan clergy; the converts to Christianity were extraordinarily few, and it was clear that the greater number of these were only paper converts. In reality most of those converted to Christianity had returned to their former faith—Lamaism or Shamanism, while others formed from all these faiths the strangest and most absurd mixture: they prayed to Christ and His Apostles; to Buddha and his Bodhisattvas; to warm boots, and felt bags containing Shamanistic charms. This double faith was not only practised by the nomad tribes, but was to be found almost everywhere in my flock, which was composed not of any single branch of one nationality but of scraps and fragments of different tribes. God only knows from whence and how they had been brought together. They were poor of speech and still poorer of understanding and imagination. Seeing that everything

concerning the missionaries was in such a chaotic state, I conceived the very lowest opinion of my fellow workers, and treated them with harshness and impatience. Altogether I had become very irritable, and the title of "tyrant" that had been given me began to be appropriate. The poor monastery, which I had chosen for my abode, and where I wished to found a school for the natives, suffered most from my anger and impatience. When I made enquiries of the monks, I learned, that in the town almost everyone spoke Yakutsk, but of the monks there was only one who could speak the native dialect; he was a very old monk and priest, Father Kiriak, but he too was of no use for the work of preaching, and even if he had been of any good, "you might kill him, but he would not go to preach to the savages."

"What is the meaning of this disobedience?" I asked. "How dare he? He must be told that I do not like this, and will not allow it."

The Ecclesiarch answered me that he would convey him my message, but it was useless to expect obedience from Kiriak, because this was not the first time; two of my predecessors, who had succeeded each other quickly, had tried severity with him, but he was obstinate and only answered:

"I will willingly give my soul for my Saviour,

but I will not go to baptize there (that is in the desert)." He even asked, they said, that he might be deprived of his office rather than he sent there. And for this disobedience for many years he had been forbidden to officiate in church, but even that did not trouble him; on the contrary he would do the most menial work with pleasure: sometimes he acted as watchman, at others as bell-ringer. He was beloved by all: by the brothers, by the laymen, and even by the heathen.

"What? I am astonished. Is it possible even by the heathen?"

"Yes, Vladyko, even some of the heathen come to see him."

"What about?"

"They respect him from the old days when he used to go and preach to them."

"What was he like then, in those old days?"

"He used to be the most successful missionary, and converted numbers of people."

"What has happened to him then? Why has he given up the work?"

"It is impossible to understand, Vladyko. Suddenly something happened to him; he returned from the desert, brought the chrismatory and the pyx, placed them on the altar and said: 'I place them here and will not take them again until the hour arrives.'"

"What hour is he awaiting? What does he mean by this?"

"I don't know, Vladyko."

"Is it possible that none of you have been able to find it out from him? O, faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? How is it that this thing that concerns all does not interest you? Remember the Lord said He would spew out of His mouth those that were neither cold nor hot; then what do you deserve who are absolutely cold?"

But my Ecclesiarch tried to justify himself:

"We tried to find out in every way, Vladyko, but he always only answered: 'No, my dear children, this work is no joke—it is terrible. . . . . I can't look on it.'"

"But when I asked what was 'terrible,' the Ecclesiarch was unable to answer me; he could only say they thought Father Kiriak had had a revelation while he was preaching. That provoked me. I must confess I am not fond of these 'hearers of voices,' who perform miracles while still alive and boast of having direct revelations, and I have my reasons for not liking them. I therefore ordered this refractory monk Kiriak to come to me at once, and not satisfied with being already considered stern and tyrannical, I

frowned terribly and was prepared to wreak my anger upon him as soon as he appeared. But when I saw before my eyes a quiet little monk, there seemed nothing for my angry glances to crush. He was clad in a faded cotton cassock, with a coarse cloth cowl; he was dark and sharp featured, but he entered boldly, without any appearance of fear, and he was the first to greet me:

"Good morning, Vladyko!"

I did not reply to his greeting, but said sternly:

"What are these tricks you are playing here, friend?"

"What, Vladyko?" he answered. "Forgive me, be gracious. I am a little hard of hearing—I did not hear all."

I repeated my words still louder:

"Now then you understand?"

"No," he answered, "I can understand nothing."

"Why do you not want to go to preach, and refuse to baptize the natives?"

"I went and baptized, Vladyko, until I had experience."

"Yes, but when you had experience you stopped."

"I stopped."

"What was the reason?"

He sighed and answered:

"The reason thereof is in my heart, Vladyko,

and He to whom all hearts are opened sees that it is too hard and above my feeble strength. . . . . I can't "

And with these words he fell at my feet.

I raised him and said :

" Do not bow down to me but explain. Have you received a revelation ? Is that it ? Or have you conversed with God Himself ? "

He answered with meek reproach :

" Do not laugh at me, Vladyko, I am not Moses, the chosen servant of God, that I should converse with the Almighty. It is a sin for you to think that."

I was ashamed of my anger, and relenting towards him said :

" What is it then ? What is the matter ? "

" The matter is evidently that I am not Moses, Vladyko, that I am timid and know the measure of my strength. Out of heathen Egypt I can lead them—but I will not be able to cleave the Red Sea, or lead them out of the wilderness and will only cause simple hearts to murmur to the great offence of the Holy Ghost."

Noticing the imagery of his animated speech, I began to think that he was himself one of the sectaries and asked him :

" What miracle has brought you into the bosom of the Church ? "

"I have been in Her bosom from my infancy," he answered, "and will remain there till I die."

He then related to me the very simple and strange story of his life. His father had been a priest, who had early become a widower and was deprived of his post for having married a couple in an illegal manner, so that during the whole of his remaining life he was unable to find another, but became the chaplain of an old lady of high position, who passed her life in travelling from place to place and fearing to die without receiving the sacrament of penitence, kept this priest always with her. Whenever she drove out he sat on the back seat of her carriage; if she entered a house to pay a visit he had to wait for her in the antechamber with the lackeys. Can you imagine a man having to pass his whole life in that way? At the same time, as he had no church of his own, he was entirely dependent on the pyx, which he carried about with him in his breast pocket, and he was even able to beg some crumbs from this lady so as to send his boy to school. In this way they arrived in Siberia. The lady came to visit her daughter, who was the wife of the governor of some place in Siberia, and the priest with the pyx in his pocket travelled with her sitting on the front seat of her carriage. But as the way was long and the lady intended to remain some time

with her daughter, the priest, who loved his little son, had refused to accompany her unless his boy could come too. The old lady reflected and hesitated long, but seeing that she could not overcome his affection for his son, at last consented to take the boy with her. So he had made the journey from Europe to Asia, having as his duty on the way to guard, by his presence, a portmanteau, that was attached to the foot-board behind the carriage, to which he himself was tied to prevent him from falling off if he dozed. It was there in Siberia that his mistress and his father had both died, and he, left alone, and unable, owing to his poverty, to finish his schooling, became a soldier and had to escort prisoners from one halting place to another. Having a good eye, he was ordered one day to fire at an escaped convict, and though he did not even take proper aim, he sent a bullet into him, and without intending to do so, to his great grief killed him. From that day he never ceased suffering, and was so tormented that he was unfit for military service and became a monk. His excellent behaviour was noticed, and his knowledge of the native language and his religious fervour caused him to be persuaded to become a missionary.

I listened to the old man's simple but touching story, and I became dreadfully sorry for him, so

in order to change my tone towards him I said:

"So what you are suspected of is not true, You have not seen any miracles?"

But he answered:

"Why should it not be true, Vladyko?"

"How so? Then you have seen miracles?"

"Who has not seen miracles, Vladyko?"

"Yet . . . ."

"Why 'yet'? Wherever you look there are miracles—there is water in the clouds, the earth is borne up by the air like a feather; here we are, you and I—dust and ashes—but we move about and think; that is also a miracle to me; we shall die and turn to dust, but our soul will go to Him who has placed it in us. It is a miracle to me that it will go naked, without anything? Who will give it wings to fly away like a dove and rest there?"

"Well, we will leave that for others to discuss; but answer me quite plainly. Have you ever in your life had any unusual manifestations or anything else of that nature?"

"In a measure, I have."

"Well, what were they?"

"Vladyko," he replied, "from my childhood I have been greatly favoured by the grace of God and though unworthy, I was twice the object of wonderful interventions."

"H'm! Tell me about it."

"The first time, Vladyko, was in my early childhood. I was still in the third class at school, and I was longing to go for a walk in the fields. Three of us boys went to the games master to ask for permission but were unable to obtain it, and decided to tell a lie; I was the ringleader. 'Let us cheat them all,' I said. 'Come along and shout: They have let us off, they have let us off.' We did so, and at our word all the boys ran out of the class rooms, and rushed into the fields to bathe and fish. In the evening I became afraid and thought 'what will happen to me when we return home. The head master will flog us.' We got back and saw the rods were already prepared in a bowl. I ran away quickly and hid myself in the bath-house under a bench, and began to pray: 'Good Lord, though I know I must be flogged, please cause me not to be flogged.' In the ardour of my faith, I prayed so earnestly for it that I even perspired and grew weak; but suddenly a wonderful fresh coolness blew over me and something moved in my heart like a warm little dove, and I began to believe that the impossibility of being saved was possible, and felt calm and so daring that I was afraid of nothing; all seemed at an end. Then I fell asleep. When I awoke, I heard my school-fellows shouting

gaily, 'Kiryusha, Kiryusha! Where are you? Come out quickly; they won't flog you. The inspector has come and we have been allowed to go out for a walk.'"

"Your miracle," I said, "is a very simple one."

"It is simple, Vladyko, as simple as the Trinity in Unity—a simple entity," he answered, and added with indiscribable joy in his eyes: "But, Vladyko, how I felt Him! How He came to me, O, my Father, the little Comforter! How He surprised and rejoiced me! You can judge for yourself. He who enfolds the whole universe, seeing the childish grief of a small boy, under the bench in the bath-house, crept up, bringing fresh coolness to his soul, and came to dwell in his little bosom."

I must confess to you, that above all the representations of the Deity, I love most this Russian God of ours Who creates for Himself a dwelling "in the little bosom." Yes—whatever those Greeks may say, and however much they may try to prove that it is to them we owe our knowledge of God, yet it was not they who revealed them to us, it was not in their magnificent Byzantinism or in the smoke of incense-burners that we discovered Him. But He is verily our own and He walks about everywhere quite simply in our own way, even under the benches of the bath-house; without frankincense He comes, entering into the

soul with cool simplicity, and like a little dove takes refuge "in the warm bosom."

"Continue, Father Kiriak," I said, "I am waiting for the story of the other miracle."

"I will tell you about the other at once, Vladyko. It happened when I was further from Him—of little faith—when I was on the way here, sitting at the back of the carriage. It had been necessary to take me out of the Russian school and bring me here just before the examinations. I did not mind this as I was always first in my class, and would have been accepted in the seminary even without an examination; but the head-master gave me a certificate in which he wrote: 'in every subject moderately good.' 'I give you this,' he said, 'on purpose; for our reputation, so that you should have to pass an examination there, and they might see what scholars we look upon as moderately good.' Both my father and I were terribly unhappy about it; and to add to this, though my father had ordered me to continue learning all the way, one day while sitting on the foot-board behind the carriage I had the misfortune to fall asleep and in crossing a river, at the ford, lost all my books. I cried bitterly at the loss, and my father gave me a severe flogging for it at the wayside inn; nevertheless before we reached Siberia I had forgotten all this and began again to pray like a little child:

'Lord, help me! Let me be accepted without an examination.' It was no good, however much I prayed to Him; they looked at my certificate and ordered me to go up for examination. I came up sad of heart, all the other boys were jolly, playing leap-frog, and jumping over each other—I alone was sad—I and another thin and miserable-looking boy who was sitting but not learning and told me it was from weakness—a fever had attacked him. I sat there looking into a book, and began in my mind to bid defiance to the Lord: well, what now, I thought, have I not prayed to Thee with all my might, and Thou hast done nothing for me. Then I rose in order to get a drink of water, when suddenly, somewhere in the middle of the room, something hit me on the back of my head and threw me to the ground. . . . I thought this is probably my punishment! God has not helped me in any way, and now He has given me a blow. Then I looked round; no; it was only that sick boy, who had tried to jump over me, but had not the strength and had fallen, and knocked me down too. The other boys said to me: 'Look, you new boy, your arm is hanging loose.' I felt it; the arm was broken. I was taken to the hospital and put to bed. My father came to see me there, and said: 'Don't grieve, Kiryusha, because of this you have been accepted without an examination.'

Then I understood how God had settled all these things and began to cry. The examination was quite an easy one, so easy that it would have been child's play for me. It meant that I, little fool, did not know what I asked for but it had been nevertheless accomplished to make me wiser.

"Ah, Father Kiriak, Father Kiriak," said I, "you are an extraordinarily consoling man." I embraced him several times, dismissed him without asking him anything further, and ordered him to come to me from the next day to instruct me in in the Tangus and Yakut languages.

IV

THE sternness I had at first shown to Kiriak I now directed on the other monks of my little monastery, in whom, I confess, I did not find the simplicity of Kiriak, nor any good works useful to the faith ; they lived, so to speak, as outposts of Christianity, in a heathen land, and yet the lazy beggars did nothing—there was not even one among them who had taken the trouble to learn the language of the natives.

I admonished them, I admonished them privately, and at last thundered at them from the pulpit the words Tzar Ivan addressed to the reverend Guri : " it is vain to call the monks angels—they cannot be compared with angels, nor have they any likeness to them, but they should resemble the Apostles, whom Christ sent to teach and baptize."

Kiriak came the next day to give me a lesson and fell at my feet.

" What is it ? What is it ? " I asked lifting him up, " worthy teacher it is not seemly that you should bow to the ground before your pupil."

"No, Vladyko, you have comforted me greatly, you have comforted me as I never hoped to be comforted in this world."

"In what way, man of God," I said, "have I pleased you so greatly?"

"In that you have ordered the monks to learn, and when they go forth, first to teach and then to baptize. You are right, Vladyko, to make this rule; Christ Himself ordered it, and His disciples say: 'Where the spirit has not been taught there can be no good.' They can all baptize but to teach the Word they are not able."

"Brother, you have understood me in a wider sense than I intended," said I; "according to you, children need not be baptized either."

"For Christian children it is different, Vladyko."

"Well, yes, but Prince Vladimir would not have baptized our forefathers at all if he had waited long for them to learn."

But he answered me:

"Ah, Vladyko, it might perhaps really have been better to have taught them first. You know well—you have read the chronicles—the brew was boiled too quickly—'inasmuch as His piety was joined with fear.' The metropolitan Platon said wisely: 'Vladimir was too hasty, and the Greeks were cunning, they baptized the ignorant—and unlearned.' Are we to imitate their haste and

cunning? You know they are 'even flatterers to this day.' And thus we are baptized in the name of Christ, but we are not clothed in Christ. It is futile to baptize in this way, Vladyko.

"How is it futile, Father Kiriak?" I asked. "What is this that you preach, my friend?"

"Why not, Vladyko?" he answered. "Is it not written in the Holy Books that baptizm with water alone is not sufficient to ensure eternal life?"

I looked at him and answered seriously:

"Listen to me, Father Kiriak, you are talking heresy."

"No, I am not heretical," he replied. "I do but repeat the orthodox words of the holy Cyril of Jerusalem: 'Simon can wash the bodies of the magi with water in the font, but he cannot illuminate their hearts with the Spirit; the body can be anointed above and below, but the soul cannot be buried and rise again.' Although he had been baptized, although he had washed his body, he was no Christian. The Lord liveth and the soul liveth, Vladyko—remember is it not written: 'there will be those that are baptized who will hear: Verily I say unto you, I know you not,' and the unbaptized, who for their deeds of righteousness will be saved and enter, because they observed righteousness and truth. Is it possible you deny this?"

Well, I thought, we could wait to talk about this, and said to him :

" Let us learn the heathen tongue, brother, and not the language of Jerusalem ; begin to teach me, and be not angry if I am slow of comprehension."

" I am not angry, Vladyko," he answered— and in truth he was a wonderfully good-natured and open-hearted old man, and taught me admirably. He disclosed to me with quickness and intelligence all the secrets of acquiring this speech, which is so poor and possesses so few words that it can scarcely be called a language. It is certainly nothing more than the language of the animal life, and not of the intellectual life ; nevertheless, it is difficult to master ; the phraseology is laconic, and it has no periods ; from this arises the difficulty of all attempts at translation into this speech of any text expressed according to the rules of a developed language, possessing complicated periods and subjunctive propositions, while poetical and figurative expressions are impossible to render ; besides the meaning they convey would be quite unintelligible to this poor people. How could you explain to them the meaning of the following words : " Be as crafty as the serpent and as gentle as the dove," when they have never seen a serpent or a dove, and are even unable to form an idea of them.

It is impossible to find words that they would understand to express martyr, baptist, forerunner, and if you translated the Holy Virgin into their language—" Shochmo Abya "—they would understand, not our Virgin Mary, but some sort of Shamonist female deity—in fact, a goddess. Of the merits of the Holy Blood, or of any other mysteries of our faith it is even more difficult to speak. You could not think of constructing for them any theological system, or of mentioning a child born of a Virgin—without a husband—they would either understand nothing, and that might be best, or else they would perhaps laugh in your face.

All this Kiriak communicated to me, and imparted it so admirably that when I had learned the spirit of the language, I could understand the whole spirit of this poor people ; and what amused me more than anything about myself was that Kiriak had succeeded in the most imperceptible manner in removing all my assumed sternness : the pleasantest relations developed between us ; they were so easy and so playful, that when I had finished my lessons, still retaining this playful tone, I ordered a pot of gruel to be prepared, placed upon it a silver rouble and a piece of black cloth for a cassock and, like a scholar, who has finished his studies, took it myself to Kiriak's cell.

He lived under the belfry in such a small cell, that when I entered there was no room for the two of us to turn round and the vaults seemed to press on the crowns of our heads ; but everything looked tidy, and in the dim grated window there was even an aster growing in a broken cooking pot.

I found Kiriak at work ; he was threading fish scales, and sewing them on to linen.

" What are you doing there ? " I asked.

" Little ornaments, Vladyko."

" What sort of little ornaments ? "

" Ornaments for the little savage girls. They come to the fair and I give them ornaments."

" So that's how you give pleasure to the unbelieving heathen."

" Oh, Vladyko ! Why do you always keep on saying the unbelieving, the unbelieving ? All were created by one God, these poor blind people ought to be pitied."

" They must be enlightened, Father Kiriak."

" To enlighten ? " he said. " It is a good thing Vladyko, to enlighten. Yes, enlighten, enlighten ——" and he murmured, " Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works."

" I have come to you," I said, " to thank you for teaching me, and have brought you a pot of gruel."

"Excellent!" he said. "Sit down to the pot of gruel yourself, and be my guest."

He asked me to be seated on a block of wood, and himself sat down on another, and placing my gruel on a bench between us said:

"Well, Vladyko, won't you partake of it with me? It's your gift and I bow to the ground and thank you for it."

So we began to partake of the gruel, the old monk and I, and conversed the while.

V

I MUST confess I was greatly interested to know what it was that had induced Kiriak to give up his successful missionary work, and caused him now to regard it so strangely, and to behave so reprehensibly and even so criminally, according to the views I held at that time.

"Of what shall we converse? After so warm a welcome we must have a good talk. Tell me, don't you know how we are to teach the Faith to these natives, whom you always take under your protection?"

"We must teach them, Vladyko, we must teach them, and show them a good example by good living."

"But how are we to teach them, you and I?"

"I do not know, Vladyko; one ought to go to them and teach them."

"That's just what is wanted."

"Yes, they must be taught, Vladyko; in the morning the seed must be sown, and in the evening, likewise, you must not give your hand any rest—you must sow the whole time."

"You talk very well—why don't you do so?"

"Excuse me, Vladyko, do not ask me."

"No, you must tell me."

"If you require me to tell you, then explain to me why I should go there?"

"To teach and baptize."

"To teach? I am incapable of teaching, Vladyko!"

"Why? Is it the devil who won't allow you?"

"No, no! What is the devil? What danger is he to a Christian? You have but to make the sign of the cross with one finger, and he will disappear, but the little devils interfere; that's the trouble."

"What little devils?"

"The wearers of epaulets, the philanthropists, the pettifoggers, the officials with all their red tape."

"These seem to be stronger than Satan himself."

"Of course; you know, this is a race that nothing will exorcise, not even prayer and fasting."

"Well, then, you must simply baptize, as all baptize."

"Baptize?" Kiriak repeated after me—and suddenly was silent and smiled.

"What is it? Go on."

The smile faded from Kiriak's lips, and he continued, with a serious, almost stern look:

"No, I don't want to do this in a hurry, Vladyko."

"What?"

"I don't want to do it in this way, Vladyko," he said with firmness, and again smiled.

"What are you laughing at?" I said. "And if I order you to baptize."

"I will not obey you," he answered, smiling good-naturedly, and slapping me familiarly on the knee continued:

"Listen, Vladyko, I don't know if you have read it. In the Lives of the Saints there is a fine story——"

But I interrupted him and said:

"Spare me the Lives, I beg you; here it is a question of the Word of God and not of the traditions of man. You, monks know, that you can find all sorts of things in the Lives and therefore love to quote them."

"Vladyko, let me finish," he answered. "I may find, even in the Lives, something appropriate."

And he told me an old story, from the first centuries of Christianity, about two friends—one a Christian, the other a heathen. The first often talked to the latter about Christianity and annoyed him with it so much, that though at first he had been indifferent, he suddenly began to abuse it, and at the moment he was showering

the greatest blasphemy on Christ and Christianity, his horse kicked and killed him. His friend, the Christian, saw in this a miracle and was appalled that his friend, the heathen, had departed this life in such a spirit of enmity towards Christ. The Christian in his distress wept bitterly and said: 'It had been better had I never spoken to him about Christ—he would then not have been provoked and would not have answered as he did.' But to his consolation, he was informed spiritually that his friend had been accepted by Christ, because, though the heathen had been provoked, by such insistent talk, he had inwardly reflected about Christ and had called to Him with his last breath.

"And He was in his heart," Kiriak added. "He embraced him and gave him a refuge."

"So I suppose this brings us again to 'in his little bosom.'"

"Yes, 'in his little bosom.'"

"Well, Father Kiriak," I said, "this is just your trouble, you rely too much on the 'little bosom.'"

"Oh, Vladyko, how am I not to rely on it; great mysteries go on there—all blessings come from it: mother's milk that nourishes the little children, and love and faith dwell therein. Believe it, Vladyko, it is so. It is there, it is all there,

it is only from the heart it proceeds, and not from the reason. With reason you cannot construct it—but can only destroy: reason gives birth to doubt, Vladyko; faith gives peace, gives happiness. This, I tell you, consoles me greatly; you see how things are going and are angry, but I always rejoice."

"Why do you rejoice?"

"Because all is very good."

"What do you mean—'all is good'?"

"All, Vladyko, that is revealed to us, and all that is hidden from us. I think, Vladyko, that we are all going to a feast."

"Please be clearer; do you simply set aside the baptism with water? It that so?"

"Well, I never. I set it aside. Oh, Vladyko, Vladyko! How many years I have been pining, always waiting for a man with whom I could converse freely about spiritual things—soul to soul—and when I knew you, I thought, this is the man I am waiting for, and now you are splitting hairs like a lawyer! What do you want? All words are vain, and I too. There is nothing I set aside. Consider what various blessings come to me—and from love, but not from hate. Have patience listen to me!"

"Very well," I answered, "I will listen; what do you want to preach?"

" Well, we are both baptized, so that is very good —that is like a ticket given us for a feast ; we go to it, and know that we are invited, because we have a ticket."

" Yes."

" Well, and then we see that alongside of us another man is wandering thither, but without a ticket. We think, what a fool ! It is useless for him to go—he will not be allowed to enter ! When he arrives the door keeper will turn him out. We come there and see the door-keeper wants to turn him out, as he has no ticket, but if the master sees him, perhaps he will allow him to enter—he will say : It does not matter that he has no ticket —I know him even without a ticket ; you may enter—and he leads him in and behold, he shows him more honour than to many another who comes with a ticket."

" Is that what you instil into them ? "

" No, why should I instil this into them ? It is only to myself I argue thus, of Christ's goodness and wisdom."

" Yes, but do you understand his wisdom ? "

" Vladyko, how can we understand it ? It can't be understood, but . . . . I only say what my heart feels. Whenever I have anything I ought to do, I ask myself : Can I do this to the glory of Christ ? If I can, then I do it, if I cannot, —then I do not do it."

"Then is this the chief principle of your teaching?"

"This, Vladyko, is my chief and only principle; all is in it; for simple hearts, Vladyko, this is so easy; it is so simple. You can't drink vodka for the glory of Christ, you can't fight or steal for the glory of Christ, you can't abandon a man without help . . . . The savages soon understand this, and approve of it. 'He is good, your little Christ,' they say. 'He is just—that is how they understand it.'"

"After all, they may be right."

"Yes, Vladyko, it is possible, but this is what I don't find right, that the newly baptized come to the town, and see what all the Christians do and ask: 'Can this be done for the glory of Christ?' What can we answer them, Vladyko? Are the people Christians or not Christians? One is ashamed to say they are not Christians, and to call them Christians would be a sin."

"How do you answer them?"

"Kiriak only made a movement with his hand and murmured:

"I say nothing . . . . I only weep . . . ."

I understood that his religious morality had come into collision with a species of politics. He had read Tertullian "On Public Spectacles," and concluded that "for the glory of Christ" it was impossible to go to the theatre, or to dance,

or to play at cards, or to do many other things which our contemporary, outwardly seeming Christians, could not do without. He was in some ways an innovator, and seeing this antiquated world, was ashamed of it, and hoped for a new one full of spirit and truth.

When I suggested this to him he at once agreed with me.

"Yes," he said, "these people are of the flesh; why show the flesh?—it must be hidden so that the name of Christ should not be brought to contempt by the hypocrites."

"How is it that people say the natives still come to you?"

"They trust me, and they come."

"So it appears, but why?"

"When they have a dispute or a quarrel they come to me. 'Settle this matter,' they say, 'according to your little Christ.'"

"And you settle it?"

"Yes, I know their customs; I apply the wisdom of Christ, and settle the matter."

"They accept it?"

"Yes, they accept it—they like His justice. At other times the sick come, and the possessed—they ask me to pray for them."

"How do you cure the possessed? Do you heal them by saying prayers?"

"No, Vladyko; I pray for them, and then I comfort them."

"Their sorcerers are said to be skilled in that."

"It is so, Vladyko—the sorcerers are not all alike; some really know many of the secret powers of nature—some of the sorcerers are not so bad. . . . They know me and even send some of their people to me."

"How is it you are on friendly terms with the Shamanists?"

"This is how it happened: The Buddhist lamas made a descent on them, and our officials took many of these Shamanists and put them to prison—the wild man is dull in prison—God only knows what happened to some of them! So I, poor sinner, used to go to the prison and took them buns, that I had begged from the merchants, and comforted them with words."

"Well, and what then?"

"They were grateful, they took them in Christ's name and praised Him; they said He was good—and kind. Yes, Vladyko, hold your peace, they themselves did not know that they were touching the hem of His garment."

"Yes, but how do they touch it?" I said. "All this has no meaning."

"Ah, Vladyko, why do you want to have everything at once. God's work goes its own way.

without bustle. Were there not six water pots at the wedding of Cana, and they were certainly not all filled at the same time, but one after the other. Why Father, even Christ, great wonder-worker that he was, first spat on the blind Jew's eyes, and then opened them; but these people are more blind than the Jews. How can we demand much from them all at once? Let them touch the hem of His garment—His goodness is felt, and He will entice them to Himself."

"Come, now, entice?"

"And why not?"

"What improper words you use!"

"In what way are they improper, Vladyko?—the word is quite a simple one. He is our benefactor, and is also not of boyard stock. He is not judged for His simplicity. Who knows His descent? But He went about with shepherds, He consorted with sinners, He had no aversion for a scabby sheep, but when He found one He would take it on His holy back, just as it was, and bear it to the Father. Well, and He—what was He to do? Not wishing to grieve His much suffering Son, He admitted the defiled one into His sheep-fold."

"Very good," I said, "as a catechist, you won't do at all, brother Kiriak, but as a baptizer, though you talk somewhat heretically, you can

be of use, and notwithstanding your wishes I will send you to baptize."

Kiriak became frightfully agitated and perturbed.

"Good gracious, Vladyko, why do you wish to force me? Christ will forbid it. Nothing will come of it, nothing, nothing, nothing!"

"Why should it be so?"

"It is so, because the door is closed to us."

"Who closed it?"

"He who has the Key of David: 'he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.' Or have you forgotten the Apocalypse?"

"Kiriak, too many books will make you foolish."

"No, Vladyko, I am not foolish, but if you do not listen to me, you will wrong many people and give offence to the Holy Ghost, and the ecclesiastical office will rejoice that in their reports they will be able to boast and tell more lies."

I ceased listening to him, but did not renounce the idea of being able to overcome his whim, and send him after all. But what do you think happened? It was not only the simple-hearted Amos of the Old Testament who suddenly began to prophesy, while picking berries—my friend Kiriak had also prophesied and his words, "Christ will forbid it," began to be fulfilled. At that very time, as if on purpose, I received a notification from

Petersburg that authority had graciously been given to increase greatly the number of Buddhist temples, and that the lists of lamas permitted in Siberia had been doubled. Although I was born in Russia, and had been taught not to be surprised at anything unexpected, still, I must confess, this condition *contra jus ef fas* astonished me, and what was much worse, it quite confused the poor people, who had been recently baptized, and even to a greater degree the unfortunate missionaries. The news of these joyful events, to the detriment of Christianity, and to the advantage of Buddhism, spread over the whole district like a whirlwind. To carry the report horses galloped, reindeer bounded, and dogs raced on every side, and Siberia was informed that the all-overcoming and all-renouncing god Fo had also overcome and cast away the little Christ in Petersburg. The triumphant lamas asserted that our rulers and even our Dalai Lama, that is the Metropolitan, had accepted the Buddhistic faith. The missionaries were alarmed when they heard this news; they did not know what to do. Some of them, I think, even began to doubt. Was it not perhaps possible that in Petersberg things had swung round to the lama's side in the same way as things had turned in those artful and intriguing times towards Roman Catholicism, and are now, in these foolish days

that are so full of fancies, turning towards spiritualism? Only, of course, it is being accomplished more quietly, because now, although the chosen idol is but a puny one, nobody wants to overthrow it. But then such cold-blooded tolerance was wanting in many, and I, poor sinner, was among that number. I could not look with indifference on my poor baptizers, who came wandering on foot out of the deserts, back to me for protection. In the whole district there was not one old nag for them, not one reindeer, not a single dog, and God only knows how they had crawled back on foot through the snow drifts. They arrived dirty and in tatters—certainly not like the priests of God Almighty, but more like real wandering cripples. The officials and the whole of the ordinary administration protected the lamas without the slightest pricks of conscience. I had almost to fight the Governor in order to persuade that Christian boyard to check his assistants from quite openly providing for Buddhism. The Governor, as usual, was offended, and we had a violent quarrel. I complained to him about his officials; he wrote to me, that nobody interfered with my missionaries, but that they were idle and unskilful. My deserter-missionaries in their turn whined that, although their mouths had not actually been gagged, they could

not get a horse or a reindeer anywhere, because everywhere in the desert the people were afraid of the lamas.

The lamas, they said, were rich—they gave money to the officials, but we have nothing to give.

What could I say to comfort them? I might have promised to propose to the Synod, that the monasteries and convents which had "much money" should share it with us who were poor, and give us a certain sum to bribe the officials, but I was afraid that in the vast halls of the Synod this request might be found out of place, and, having prayed to God, they might refuse me assistance for the purpose of bribery. At the same time, even if such means were in our hands, this might also be uncertain: my apostles had disclosed to me so much weakness in themselves, which in conjunction with the circumstances, had a very grave significance.

"We feel compassion for the savages," they said, "They will lose the little sense they have from all this worry; to-day we baptize them, tomorrow the lamas convert them and order them to deny Christ, and as a penalty take anything they can find belonging to them. The poor people are beggared of their cattle and their scanty understanding—all the religions become muddled

for them, they limp on both legs, and complain to us."

This contest greatly interested Kiriak, and taking advantage of my favour he often stopped me with the question :

"Vladyko, what has the enemy written to you ?" or :

"Vladyko, what have you written to the enemy ?"

He once even came to me with a request.

"Vladyko, consult with me, when you write to the enemy."

This was on the occasion when the governor had informed me that in the neighbouring diocese where the conditions were exactly the same as where I was stationed, preaching and baptizing were progressing successfully, and at the same time pointed out to me a certain missionary named Peter, a Zyryan, who baptized great numbers of the natives.

These circumstances disturbed me, and I asked the neighbouring bishop if it was so.

He answered it was quite true he had a Zyryan priest Peter, who had twice gone out to preach and the first time had baptized so many, that he had "no crosses left," and the second time had taken double the number of crosses, and had still not had enough, and had been

obliged to take them from one neck to hang them on another.

When Kiriak heard this he began to weep.

"My God," he said, "from whence has this crafty worker come to add to all our trouble. He will drown Christ in His Church in His own blood! Oh, what a misfortune! Have pity, Vladyko, —hasten to ask the bishop to restrain his too faithful servant—to leave something to the Church even if only power for sowing."

"Father Kiriak," I said, "you are talking nonsense, How can I attempt to restrain a man from such praiseworthy zeal?"

"Oh, no, Vladyko," he implored me, "beg him; this is incomprehensible to you, but I understand what is now being done in the desert. All this is not for Christ's sake; but the work done there serves His enemies. He will be drowned. They will drown Him, the little Dove, with blood, and for a hundred years more the people will be frightened away from Him."

Of course, I did not listen to Kiriak, but on the contrary wrote to the neighbouring bishop, asking him to give me his Zyryan to help me, or as the Siberian aristocrats say in French: "au proka."* At that time my neighbour had just been rescued from his Siberian penance, and as he was to be

*A mixture of French and Russian, meaning "on loan."

recalled to Russia he did not insist on retaining his adroit baptizer. The Zyryan was sent to me: he was large, bearded, and loquacious, an oily man. I sent him at once to the desert and already two weeks later received joyful news: he informed me that he had baptized the people everywhere. There was only one thing he feared: would he have sufficient crosses, though he had taken a very fair sized boxful with him. From this I did not fail to conclude that the draught caught in the net of this successful fisherman was very considerable.

I thought: "Now at last I have found the right man for this work!" I was very glad of it. Very glad indeed. I will tell you frankly —from quite an official point of view—because, gentlemen, a bishop is also a man, and he becomes wearied, when one authority tells him, "Baptize," and another says "Let it alone." A plague on them all, I thought. It is best to settle it in one way or the other, and as I have come across a skilful baptizer, let him baptize the whole lot of them together; perhaps people will be quieter then.

But Kiriak did not share my opinion; and one evening when I was crossing the yard from the bath-house we met; he stopped and greeted me:

"Good evening, Vladyko."

"Good evening, Father Kiriak," I answered.

"Have you had a good wash?"

"Yes, I've had a good wash."

"Have you washed away the Zyryan?"

I grew angry.

"What is this nonsense?" I said.

But he again began to talk about the Zyryan.

"He is pitiless," he said. "He is now baptizing here as he baptized in the Transbaikal. Those he baptizes are only tormented by it and they complain of Christ. It is a sin for all, and for you more than for any, Vladyko."

I considered Kiriak rude, but nevertheless his words entered my soul. What could it be? He was a sagacious old man—he would not chatter to the empty air. What was the secret of all this? How did this adroit Zyryan taken by me "au proka" really baptize. I knew something about the religiosity of the Zyryans. They are especially known as temple builders—their churches, wherever they are found, are fine and even rich, but of all the sects in this world that call themselves Christians, one must confess they are the most superficial. To none, so well as to them can the definition be applied: "God is only in their icons, but not in their souls." But surely this Zyryan did not burn the savages to make them become Christians. That could not be.

What was at the bottom of this business? Why did this Zyryan have success and the Russians have none? And why did I know nothing about it?

Then the thought came to me: "It is because you, Vladyko, and those like you are egoistic and pretentious. You collect much money, and only go about, within the sound of the church bells. You think nothing about the distant parts of your diocese, and only judge of them by hearsay. You complain of your impotence in your own country, while all the time you are trying to snatch at the stars and are asking: 'What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?' Take care, brother, that you do not become like that too."

That evening I paced up and down my dull and empty room thinking, and I walked about until this thought came into my head: Why should I myself not travel through the desert?

In this manner I hoped to be able to elucidate myself, if not all, at any rate, very much; and I must confess to you, I also wanted freshening up a little.

To accomplish such a journey, owing to my own inexperience, I required a companion, who would know the native language well; and what better companion could I wish for than Kiriak?

Being impatient, I did not delay long, but sent at once for Kiriak, informed him of my plan, and ordered him to get ready.

He did not gainsay me; on the contrary, he seemed to be very pleased and smiling, kept on repeating:

"May God help! May God help!"

There was no reason to delay our departure, so already the next morning after having assisted at very early matins, we dressed ourselves like the natives, and set out, taking the road straight to the North, where my Zyryan was carrying on his apostolic mission.

VI

THE first day we drove rapidly along in a good troika. I conversed all the time with Father Kiriak. The dear old man related to me interesting stories of the native religious traditions. The story that interested me most was about the five hundred travellers who, under the guidance of an "Obushy," which means in their language a "book-man," started to journey in the world at the time when the god Shigemuny having "conquered all the demoniac powers and repulsed all weakness," feasted in Shirvas "on viands such as had never been touched before." This legend is specially interesting because it shows the whole form and spirit of the religious imagination of this people. Five hundred travellers conducted by the Obushy met a spirit, who, in order to frighten them, appeared in the most terrible and disgusting forms, and asked them: "Have you ever seen such monsters?" "We have more dreadful ones," answered the Obushy. "Who are they?" "All who are envious, greedy, lying, and revengful; after death they become monsters, much more terrible and

disgusting than these." The spirit hid himself and changed into such a lean and gaunt man that the veins stuck to his bones, and then appeared again to the travellers and said: "Have you such people?" "Of course," answered the Obushy, "there are even much thinner people than you are—they are all those who aspire to honours."

"H'm!" I interrupted Kiriak, "take care; does the moral not refer to us bishops?"

"God knows, Vladyko," and he continued: "After some time the spirit appeared in the form of a handsome youth and said: "Have you such as these?" "Of course," answered the Obushy. "Among men there are some incomparably handsomer than you—they are those who possess keen understanding and having purified their hearts, revere the three beatitudes: God, Faith and Holiness. These are so much more handsome than you are, that you would not even be found worthy to be compared with them." The spirit was enraged at this and began to test the Obushy in another way. He scooped up a handful of water. "Where is there more water," he asked, "in the sea or in my hand?" "There is more in your hand," answered the Obushy. "Prove it." "Well, I will prove it. If you judge by appearance, there certainly seems to be more

water in the sea than in your hand, but when the time comes for the world to be destroyed, and out of the present sun another emerges discharging fire, then it will dry up all the waters in the world, both the large and the small ones, and the seas, and the rivers, and the streams, and even Atlas will crumble away, but whoever in his lifetime has given the thirsty to drink from his hand, or whoever has washed the wounds of the beggars with his hand, even seven suns will not dry up his handful of water, but on the contrary they will multiply and increase it."

"Well, gentlemen, what do you truly think of this? It is not so very stupid?" asked the narrator, pausing for a moment. "Eh? No, really, what do you think of it?"

"It is not at all stupid, Vladyko, not at all stupid."

I must own, to me too, it seems more intelligent than many a lengthy sermon about justification. Well, it was not only of this we talked. After that we had long discussions about the best method to convert the heathen to Christianity. Kiriak was of the opinion that for them it was best to have the least possible amount of ceremony, because otherwise they would even surpass Kirika himself with questions like, "Can one administer the Communion to one who taps his teeth with

an egg?" One must also not dogmatize too much, he said, because their weak understanding grows weary of following any abstraction or syllogism, but one must simply tell them about the life and miracles of Christ, so that it should appear to them in the most lifelike manner, and in a way that their poor imagination could grasp. But the most important, and on this he continued to insist, is that "he who is wise and skilful must show them goodness by his life; then they will understand Christ"; otherwise, he said, our work would go badly, and our true faith, although we may proclaim it among them, will remain inferior to their own untrue faith. Ours will be nominal, the other active. What good is there in it, Vladyko? Judge for yourself: Will this be for the triumph of the Christian faith or for its degradation? It will be still more bitter if they take something from us, and who knows what they may make of it? There is no use hastening to proclaim it, we must sow; others will come and water it, and God Himself will make it grow. . . . . Is it not in this way, Vladyko, that the Apostle teaches? Eh? Remember Him; it must be thus. Otherwise, if we hasten, see that we do not make people laugh, and cause Satan to rejoice."

I must confess in my soul I agreed with him,

on many questions, and in these simple and peaceful conversations, I did not notice how the whole day passed away; the evening brought us to the end of our journey with horses.

We passed the night near the fire in a nomad tent, and the next morning started in reindeer sledges.

The weather was beautiful, and the drive with reindeers interested me very much, though it did not come up to my expectations. In my childhood I often liked to look at a picture representing a Laplander in a reindeer sledge. But the reindeers in the picture were slight, light-limbed creatures that flew along like the wind of the desert, throwing back their heads and branching antlers, and I always thought: "Could I but drive like that, if only once. How delightfully rapid that pace must be." However, in reality it was quite different. I had before me not those flying antlered whirlwinds, but shaggy, heavy limbed animals that plodded on with hanging heads and fleshy straddling legs. They ran at an uneven, uncertain pace with bent heads and such heavy breathing that anyone not used to seeing them would have been sorry for them, especially when their nostrils became frozen and they opened their mouths wide. They breathed so heavily that their breath formed clouds and hung like a streak

in the frozen air. This means of travel and the desolate monotonous country that revealed itself to us, made such a tedious wearisome impression that one did not even feel inclined to talk, and Kiriak and I hardly conversed at all, during the two days we travelled in reindeer sledges.

On the evening of the third day this mode of travelling ceased; the snow became less compact, and we exchanged the unwieldy reindeer for dogs. They were gay, shaggy, and sharp-eared dogs, that looked like wolves, and even yelped almost like wolves. They are harnessed in great numbers, as many as fifteen to the sledge, and for an honoured traveller perhaps even more are attached, but the sledges are so narrow that two cannot sit abreast, so that Father Kiriak and I were obliged to separate. I and a driver had to go in one sledge, and Kiriak with another driver in another. The drivers seemed to be much the same in skill, and their countenances were so much alike, you could not distinguish one from the other, especially when they were wrapped up in their reindeer fur coats that looked like soap-suds: both were equally beautiful. But Kiriak discovered a difference in them and insisted upon seating me in the sledge of the one he considered most trustworthy, but wherein he discovered this trustworthiness he did not explain.

"It is so, Vladyko," he said; "you are less experienced than I am in this country, so go with this man." But I would not listen to him, and sat down in the other sledge. Our baggage we divided. I took a bundle of linen and books at my feet, and Kiriak hung the chrismatory and the pyx round his neck and placed at his feet a wallet with oatmeal, dried fish and the remainder of our modest provisions for this campaign.

We settled ourselves in the sledges, well wrapped up in reindeer fur coats, with reindeer skin-covers fastened over our legs, and recommenced our journey.

We proceeded much faster than with the reindeer, but it was so uncomfortable to sit in the sledge, that before an hour had passed my back began to ache terribly. I looked at Kiriak—he sat as straight as a post that had been stuck into the sledge, while I swayed from side to side—I always wanted to keep the balance, and owing to these gymnastics, I was even unable to speak to my driver. I only found out that he had been baptized and baptized quite recently by my Zyryan, but I had not time to examine him. By evening I was so exhausted that I was unable to bear it any longer and complained to Kiriak:

"I'm feeling bad; from the very beginning something seemed to shake me."

"That's because you did not listen to me—you would not go with the driver I wanted you to go with. This one drives better, much quieter. Please change sledges to-morrow."

"Very well," I said, "I'll do as you wish," and the next day I got into the other sledge and we set out again.

I do not know if, during the previous day, I had become accustomed to sitting on this sort of peasant's sledge, or if it was really that this driver managed his long stick better, but it was much more comfortable, and I was even able to converse with him.

I asked him if he was baptized or not.

"No, Bachka,* me no baptized, me happy!"

"In what way are you happy?"

"Happy, Bachka; Dzol-Dzayagachy have give me Bachka. She take care me."

Dzol-Dzayagachy is a goddess of the Shamanists, who gives children, and who looks after the happiness and the health of those children who have been born, thanks to prayers addressed to her.

"That's all very well," I said, "but why don't you get baptized."

"She would not allow me to be baptized, Bachka."

*Bachka is the savages' corruption of Batyushka (reverend father used in addressing priests.

"Who? Dzol-Dzayagachy?"

"Yes, Bachka, she won't allow."

"Ah! It is well that you told me this."

"Of course, Bachka, it is well."

"Yes, but just for that, in spite of your Dzol-Dzayagachy, I will order you to be baptized."

"What do you mean, Bachka? Why anger Dzol-Dzayagachy? She will be enraged—she will beat me!"

"What do I care for her, your Dzol-Dzayagachy? You shall be baptized—that is enough."

"No, Bachka, she won't allow me to be wronged."

"How can that wrong you, you stupid fellow?"

"Why, Bachka, you baptize me? It do me much wrong, Bachka. Zaysan comes; he beat me because baptized. Shaman comes, again beat. Lama comes—also beat and drive away reindeer. Bachka, great wrong to me."

"They won't dare to do it."

"How, Bachka, they won't dare? They dare Bachka, they take all, they ruined my uncle, Bachka. . . . Yes, Bachka, they ruined my brother Bachka, ruined . . . ."

"Have you a brother, who has been baptized?"

"Of course, Bachka, I have a brother, Bachka. I have one."

"And he has been baptized?"

"Yes, Bachka, twice baptized."

"What do you mean? Twice baptized? As if one is baptized twice?"

"Indeed, Bachka, they baptized twice."

"You lie."

"No, Bachka, it's true. He was baptized once for himself, and once for me."

"How for you? What nonsense you are talking."

"What nonsense, Bachka? No nonsense. I hid myself from priest, Bachka, and he baptized my brother instead of me."

"Why did you cheat in that way?"

"Because, Bachka, he is kind."

"Who is kind? Is your brother kind?"

"Yes, Bachka, my brother. He said: 'It's all the same, I am lost—baptized; hide—I will be baptized again'—so I hid."

"Where is your brother now?"

"He is gone to be baptized again."

"Where is this idle fellow off to now?"

"There, Bachka, where one hears a hard priest is travelling."

"Ho, ho! What has he got to do with this priest?"

"Our people are there, Bachka, our people live there, indeed good people, Bachka. He is sorry. Bachka . . . . sorry for them, Bachka—he has hurried to be baptized for them."

"What sort of a 'Shaytan' is this brother of yours? How dare he do such a thing?"

"Why not, Bachka, it's nothing; for him it's all the same, Bachka, but for them, Bachka, the Zaysan won't beat them, and the lamas won't drive their reindeer away."

"H'm! Still, I must keep an eye on your idle brother. Tell me his name?"

"Kuz'ka-Demyak, Bachka."

"Kuz'ma or Demyan?"*

"No, Bachka, Kuz'ka-Demyak."

"Yes, it's easier for you—Kuz'ka-Demyak, or a copper pyatak†—but they are two names."

"No, Bachka, one."

"I tell you they are two."

"No, Bachka, one."

"Get along, you evidently know this better than me, too."

"Of course, Bachka, I know it better."

"Did they give him the names of Kuz'ma and Demyan at the first or second baptism?"

He looked fixedly at me but did not understand; but when I repeated my question he thought and answered:

"That is so, Bachka; when he had been bap-

*In the orthodox church only one name is given at baptism.

†Pyatak: a copper five copeck piece. A popular jingle.

tized for me, then they began to mock him as Kyz'ka-Demyak."

"And after his first baptism, how did they mock him?"

"I don't know, Bachka—I have forgot."

"But possibly he knows it."

"No, Bachka, he has also forgot it."

"It is impossible," I said.

"No, Bachka—it's true he has forgot it."

"Well, I will have him found and will ask him."

"You may have him found, Bachka, you may have him found; but he will say he has forgot it."

"Yes, but when I find him, brother, I will give him up to the Zaysan."

"It doesn't matter, Bachka, nothing matters to him now, Bachka—he is already lost."

"In what way is he lost? Is it because he has been baptized? Is it that?"

"Yes, Bachka; the Shaman drives him away, the Lama has carried off his reindeer, none of his people trust him."

"What do you mean, you foolish savage? You lie. Why can't the baptized be trusted? Is the baptized man worse than you idolaters?"

"Why worse, Bachka?—he's also a man."

"Now you yourself agree he is not worse."

"I don't know, Bachka—you say he is not worse, and I say so; but he can't be trusted."

"Why can't he be trusted?"

"Because the priest forgives him his sins, Bachka."

"Well, and what is there wrong in that? What, is it better to remain without forgiveness?"

"How can one remain without forgiveness, Bachka? That's impossible, Bachka, one must ask forgiveness."

"Well, then, I don't understand you; what are you talking about?"

"This is what I say, Bachka: a baptized man will steal, and tell the priest, and the priest, Bachka, will forgive him; and therefore people won't trust him, Bachka."

"What nonsense you are talking! And this, of course, you think is not right."

"This, we think, doesn't do for us, Bachka."

"How ought it to be to your thinking?"

"In this way, Bachka, if you have stolen from anybody, take the thing back to him, and ask for forgiveness; if the man forgives, God forgives too."

"Yes, but the priest is a man also, why can't he forgive?"

"Why should he not forgive, Bachka? The priest can also forgive. If he had stolen from the priest, Bachka, the priest can forgive."

"But if he had stolen from another, then he can't forgive?"

"How can he, Bachka? He can't, Bachka: it will be untrue, Bachka, the faithless man, Bachka, will go everywhere."

So, so, you unwashed booby, I thought to myself, what fine arguments you have built up for yourself! and I continued to question him.

"And have you heard anything about our Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Certainly, Bachka—I have heard."

"What have you heard about Him?"

"He walked on the water, Bachka."

"H'm. Very well, He walked on the water; and what else?"

"He drowned the swine in the sea, Bachka."

"And more than that?"

"Nothing, Bachka. He was kind and compassionate, Bachka."

"Well, how was He compassionate? What did He do?"

"He spat in the blind man's eyes, Bachka—and the blind man saw; He fed the people with bread and fishes."

"I see, brother, you know much."

"Certainly, Bachka, I know much."

"Who told you all this?"

"People, Bachka, the poeple told me."

"Your people?"

"The people? Of course, Bachka—our people, our people."

"And from whom have they heard it?"

"I don't know, Bachka."

"Well, and don't you know why Christ came here upon earth?"

He thought a long time, but did not answer.

"Don't you know?" I asked.

"I don't know."

I told him all about the Orthodox faith, and I was not sure if he listened or not; all the time he was whooping at the dogs or brandishing his long stick.

"Well, have you understood what I have been telling you?" I asked.

"Of course, Bachka, I've understood: He drowned the swine in the sea, he spat in the blind man's eyes—the blind man saw again; He gave bread and fishes to the people."

They had stuck in his head: these swine in the sea, the blind man, and the fishes, and nothing more could penetrate there. . . . I remembered Kiriak's words, about their poor understanding, and how they themselves did not notice how they touched the hem of His garment. What then? This one too had possibly touched the hem, but certainly only just touched it—hardly touched it—only felt it with the tip of his finger: how could he be taught to catch hold of it more firmly? So I

tried to converse with him in the most simple manner about the blessings of Christ's example and the object of His sufferings; but my listener continued imperturbably to brandish his long stick in the same way. It was difficult to deceive myself. I saw that he did not understand anything.

"You have understood nothing?" I asked.

"Nothing, Bachka—you making lies of truth; I am sorry for Him. He was good, the little Christ."

"Good?"

"He was good, Bachka, He must not be wronged."

"You ought to love Him?"

"How could one not love Him, Bachka?"

"What? You could love Him?"

"How could I not, Bachka—I always loved Him, Bachka."

"That's right, my good lad."

"Thank you, Bachka."

"Now it only remains for you to be baptized. He will save you, too."

The savage was silent.

"What is it, friend?" I said. "Why are you silent?"

"No, Bachka."

"What do you mean by 'No, Bachka.'"

"He won't save me, Bachka; for Him the

Zaysan beats, the Shaman beats, the Lama drives away reindeer."

"So that's the chief misfortune!"

"Yes, Bachka."

"You must bear the misfortune for Christ's sake."

"Why, Bachka—He is compassionate, Bachka. When I die, He Himself will be sorry for me. Why should we wrong Him?"

I wanted to tell him, that if he believed Christ would have compassion on him, he ought also to believe that He could save him too—but refrained so as not to hear again about the Zaysan and the Lama. It was evident that for this man Christ was one of his kind deities, perhaps even his kindest, but not one of the strong ones; kind, but not strong—not protective. He would not defend him from the Zaysan, nor from the Lama. What was to be done in this case? How was I to persuade the savage of this when on Christ's side there was no one to support Him, and on the other side there was much defence. A Roman Catholic priest, in the same circumstances, would have used cunning, as they had used cunning in China; he would have placed a small cross at the feet of Buddha and he would have bowed down before it assimilating Christ and Buddha, and he would have been proud of his success;

and another innovation would have explained such a Christ, that nothing would remain to believe in—only think of Him becomingly and—you will be good. But even that was difficult in this case: how was my fine fellow to commence thinking, when all his thinking powers were frozen into a lump, and he could not thaw them again.

I remembered how Karl von Eckartshausen with the simplest comparisons was able admirably to convey to simple people the greatness of Christ's sacrifice in coming to earth, by making the comparison of a free man who, through his love for criminal prisoners, went to dwell with them in prison so as to share their sinful nature. Very simple and good; but my hearer, thanks to circumstances, knew no greater villains than those from whom he was running away to prevent them from baptizing him; he knew no other place, that might have produced on him greater horror, to compare with the terrible place he always inhabited. . . . Nothing could be done for him—either with Massillon or Bourdalone, or Eckartshausen. There he was poking his stick into the snow or cracking it—his face like a lump of soapsuds—there was no expression in his peep-holes (it would be a shame to call them eyes); there was not a spark of the soul's fire; even the sound

of the words that issued from his throat seemed somehow dead : in grief or in joy there was always the same intonation—slow and passionless—half the words were swallowed in his gullet, half were squeezed by his teeth. How was he with these means to seek for abstract truths, and what could he do with them ? They would be a burden to him : he must only die out with his whole race as the Aztecs have died, or the Red Indians are dying.—A terrible law ! What happiness that he does not know it.—He only knows how to thrust his stick into the snow—first he sticks it in on the right side then he sticks it in on the left side ; he does not know where he is driving me, why he is driving me, or why, like a child with a simple heart, he is unfolding to me, for his own harm, his most sacred secrets. . . . His whole talent is small, and it is a blessing for him that little will be asked of him. He was being carried on into the boundless distance, flourishing his long stick, which waving before my eyes, began to have the effect of a pendulum on me. These regular flourishes, like the passes of a mesmerist, caught me in their somnolent meshes ; drowsiness crept over my brain and I fell asleep quietly and sweetly—I fell asleep only to awaken in a position, in which, God forbid, any living soul should find himself.

VII

I SLEPT soundly and probably long, but suddenly it seemed that something jostled me and I found myself sitting up bent on one side. Still half asleep, I wanted to right myself, but noticed that something shoved me back. There was howling all around—what had happened? I wanted to see, but I had nothing to see with, for my eyes would not open. I called to my savage.

"Hi, you, friend! Where are you?"

He shouted into my very ear:

"Wake up, Bachka, wake up quickly! You'll freeze."

"What has happened? I can't open my eyes."

"Directly, Bachka, you'll open them."

And with these words—what do you think he did? He spat in my eyes and then rubbed them with the sleeve of his reindeer coat.

"What are you about?"

"Rubbing your eyes, Bachka."

"Get along, you fool . . . ."

"No, wait a moment, Bachka—I'm not a fool. You'll soon see again."

It was quite true, when he rubbed my face with his fur coat sleeve, my frozen eyelashes thawed and my eyelids opened. But on what? What was to be seen? I do not know if it can be even more terrible in hell: all around there was profound impenetrable darkness—and it seemed alive, it trembled and cracked like a monster whose body was a compact mass of frozen dust and whose breath was life-destroying cold. Yes, it was death in one of its most awful shapes, and meeting it face to face, I was terrified.

The only thing I was able to say was to ask about Kiriak, Where was he? But it was so difficult to speak that the savage did not hear me. Then I noticed that when he spoke to me, he bent down and shouted under the lappets of my fur cap, straight into my ear, and I also shouted under his fur cap:

"Where is the other sledge?"

"Don't know, Bachka, we have been separated."

"How separated?"

"Separated, Bachka."

I did not want to believe this; I wanted to look round, but I could not see anything in any direction; all around us was hell, dark and terrible. Under my side and close to the sledge something moved like a ball, but it was impossible to see

what it was. I asked the savage what it could be, and he answered :

" The dogs, Bachka, have lost their way and are trying to warm themselves."

Shortly after he made a movement in the darkness and said :

" Fall down, Bachka."

" Fall down where ? "

" Here, Bachka—fall into the snow."

" Wait," I said.

I could not yet believe that I had lost my Kiriak, and wanted to stand up in the sledge and call to him, but at the same moment I felt smothered, as if I had been choked with all this frozen dust, and I fell down into the snow, giving my head a somewhat severe blow on the edge of the sledge. I had no strength to rise again, and even if I had had the strength, my savage would not have allowed me to do so. He held me fast and said :

" Lie still, Bachka, lie quiet ; you will not die. The snow will cover us up, it will be warm. Otherwise you will perish. Lie still."

There was nothing else to be done. I had to obey him, and he pulled the reindeer skins off the sledge, threw them over me, and then crawled under them too.

" Now, Bachka, it'll be nice."

But this " nice " was so nasty, that I instantly

had to turn away as far as possible from my neighbour, because his presence at a short distance was unbearable. The corpse of Lazarus, that had lain four days in the grave of Bethany, could not have stunk more than this live man did. It was worse than the stench of a corpse ; it was a mixture of the fetid smell of the reindeer skins, the strong odour of human sweat, smoke, damp rottenness, dried fish, fish fat and dirt. . . . "O, God," I cried, "what a miserable man am I ! How loathsome this brother, created after Thine image, is to me." Oh, how gladly would I have escaped from this stinking grave, in which he had placed me next to himself ; if I had only had strength and power to stand in this hellish drifting chaos ! But nothing resembling such a possibility could be expected—and I had to submit.

My savage noticed that I had turned away, and said :

"Stop, Bachka, you have turned your snout the wrong way—put your snout here—we will blow together—it will soon get warmer."

Even to hear this seemed terrible.

I pretended not to hear him, but suddenly he hopped on to me, like a bug, rolled over me, lay down with his nose touching mine, and began to breathe into my face with terrible sniffs and stench. He blew extraordinarily loud, like a blacksmith's

bellows. I could not bear it, and tried to make him stop.

"Breathe in a quieter way," I said.

"Why? It does not matter, Bachka, I'm not tired; I can warm your snout, Bachka."

Of course his having said "snout" did not offend me, because I had no ambition at that moment, and I repeat that for the expression of useless niceties such as making a distinction between an animal's snout and a man's face, no separate words existed in their language. Everything was snout; he himself had a snout, his wife had a snout, his reindeer had a snout, his god Shigemony had a snout. Why should a bishop not have a snout too? My grace could put up with this easily, but the difficulty was to endure his breath, the stink of dried fish, and some other disgusting odour—probably the stench of his own stomach—I could not stand it.

"It's enough," I said. "Stop, you have warmed me; now, don't blow any more."

"No, Bachka, we must blow, it will be warmer."

"No, please don't; you've bored me enough with it—I don't want it."

"Well, Bachka, if you don't want it, we needn't. Now we can go to sleep."

"Go to sleep."

"And you, Bachka, go to sleep."

A second after he had said this, like a well-trained horse, that at once starts at a gallop, he instantly fell asleep, and began to snore. Yes, how the rascal snored! I must confess to you, that from my childhood I have been a great enemy of all who snore in their sleep, and if even one snoring man is in the room I am a martyr, and it is impossible for me to get to sleep. As we had many snorers in the seminary and the academy, I often could not help listening to them attentively, and I am not joking when I tell you that I worked out a theory about snoring. By his snores, I assure you, I can judge of a man's character and temperament as well as you can by his voice, or his walk. I assure you, it is so; a passionate man snores passionately just as if even in his sleep he was in a rage. I had a comrade in the academy who was gay and a dandy, so he snored in a dandified way.—so gaily, with a sort of whistle, just as if he were going to the cathedral of his own town for the first time in a new gown. It often happened that they came from the other dormitories to listen to him and admire his art. But now my savage neighbour started such music as I had never heard before, nor had I ever observed or heard such an extensive diapason, nor such rapid time; it was just as if a large swarm of bees was humming and knocking gently on the sides of a dry, re-

sonant, bee-hive. Beautifully, gravely, rhythmically, and in time thus: ou-ou-ou-ou—bum-bum-bum, ou-ou-ou-ou—bum, bum-bum. According to my observations, I could have concluded that this was produced by a punctual and reliable man, but unfortunately I could make no observations: that brigand quite overpowered me with his noise. I suffered, I suffered long, —at last could bear it no more, and poked him in the ribs.

"Don't snore," I said.

"Why, Bachka? Why shouldn't I snore?"

"You snore horribly, you don't let me sleep."

"You ought to snore too."

"I don't know how to snore."

"And I know how to, Bachka," and he instantly started droning at full speed.

What could you do with such an artist? How could you argue with such a man, who in every way was your superior; he knew more about baptism than I did, and how many times one could be baptized, he was learned in names, and knew how to snore, and I did not know how to—in everything he had the advantage—he must be given all due honour and precedence.

I drew back from him as far as I could, and a little to the side, and with difficulty getting my hand under my cassock, pressed my repeater; the watch struck only three and three-quarters.

That meant it was still day; the blizzard, would, of course, last the whole night, perhaps even longer. . . . Siberian blizzards are of long duration. You can imagine what it was to have all this before one. In the meantime my position became more and more terrible; we had certainly been well covered up with snow, and in our lair it was, not only warm, but stuffy; but, on the other hand, the horrible sickening exhalations became more dense—my breath was taken away by this suffocating stench, and it was a pity it had not finished me quite, because I would then not have experienced a hundredth part of those sufferings which I felt, when I remembered that with Father Kiriak not only my bottle with brandy and water, but all our provisions had been lost. I clearly saw that if I was not suffocated here as in the Black Hole, I was certainly threatened with the most terrible, the most painful of all deaths —the death from starvation and thirst, which had already begun its torments on me. Oh, how I regretted that I had not remained above to freeze, but had crawled into this snowy coffin, where we two were lying so close together and under such a weight, that all my efforts to raise myself and get up were quite useless.

With the greatest trouble I was able to get from under my shoulder some small pieces of

snow, and greedily swallowed them, one after the other, but—alas ! this did not alleviate my sufferings at all—on the contrary, it only aroused in me nausea and an unbearable burning in the throat and stomach, and especially near the heart ; my head was ready to split : I had ringing in the ears and my eyes burnt, and stood out of their sockets. While all the time the tiresome swarm of bees hummed louder and louder, and knocked more sonorously on the sides of the hive. This horrible condition lasted until my repeater struck seven—after which I don't remember anything more, as I lost consciousness.

This was the greatest good luck, that could have befallen me in this disastrous position. I do not know if I rested physically during that time, but in any case I did not suffer from the thoughts of what I had before me, the horrors of which must in reality greatly exceed all the representations that an alarmed fantasy could conjure up.

VIII

WHEN I regained consciousness, the swarm of bees had flown away, and I found myself at the bottom of a deep hole under the snow; I was lying at the very bottom of it with outstretched arms and legs, and I felt nothing; neither cold, nor hunger, nor thirst. No, nothing at all. Only my head was so confused and dull that it caused me some trouble to recall to my memory all that had happened to me, and in what position I then was. But of course all this became clear at last, and the first thought that entered my mind at the time was that my savage had woken up before me, and had run off alone, leaving me to my fate.

Indeed, looking at it from an impartial point of view, he should have done so, especially after my threats of yesterday to have him baptized, and to have search made for his brother Kuz'ma-Demyan; but he in his heathen manner acted differently. I had scarcely moved my stiffened limbs and sat up on the bottom of my hollowed grave, when I saw him about thirty paces from me. He was

standing under a large rime-covered tree, and was making strange movements, and above him on a long branch a dog was hanging, from whose ripped up belly the still warm intestines were hanging out.

I understood that he was making a sacrifice, or, as they say, performing a mystery, and to speak the truth, I was not sorry that this sacrifice had detained him until I was awake, and could prevent him from abandoning me. For I was firmly persuaded that the heathen must certainly have the unchristian intention of doing so, and I envied Father Kiriak, who was now, though suffering the same misfortunes, at least in the company of a Christian, who would doubtless be more reliable than my heathen. It may have been caused by my own difficult position, that a suspicion was born in me that perhaps Father Kiriak, who was able to foresee, better than I could, all the accidents of Siberian travel, had, under the guise of benevolence, cunningly managed to pass on to me the heathen, while he took the Christian for himself. Of course this was not at all like Father Kiriak, and even now, when it recurs to my memory, I feel ashamed of these suspicions ; but what was I to do when they crossed my mind ?

I crawled out of the snow heap and began to approach my savage ; he heard the snow creak

under my feet, and turned round, but at once resumed the performance of his mysteries.

"Well, have you not bowed enough?" I said, after standing beside him for about a minute.

"Enough, Bachka"—and returning at once to the sledge, he began to reharness the remaining dogs. When they were harnessed we started.

"To whom were you making that sacrifice?" I asked him, pointing back.

"I don't know, Bachka."

"But you sacrificed the dog to some one?—to God or to the devil?—to Shaytan?"

"To Shaytan, Bachka, of course, to Shaytan."

"Why did you make him this gift?"

"Because he did not freeze us, Bachka; it was for that I gave him the dog for him grub."

"H'm! yes, for him grub—he won't burst, but I'm sorry for the dog."

"Why, Bachka, why are you sorry? The dog was a bad one, it would soon have died; it does not matter—let him have it—let him grub?"

"So that's how you reckon? You gave him a dog that was half dead."

"Of course, Bachka."

"Please tell me, where are you driving now?"

"Don't know, Bachka, we're looking for the track."

"But where is my priest—my companion?"

"Don't know, Bachka."

"How are we to find him?"

"Don't know, Bachka."

"Perhaps he has been frozen."

"Why should he be frozen? There's snow, he won't freeze."

I remembered that Kiriak had the bottle with warming drink, and the basket of provisions, and was reassured. I had nothing of the sort with me, and now I would gladly have eaten even the dogs' dried fish; but I was afraid to ask for it, because I was not sure if we had any.

All day long we seemed to be going round and round at random; I saw it, if not by the passionless face of my driver, by the restless, irregular and troubled movements of his dogs, which seemed to be jumping about, fidgeting, and always throwing themselves from side to side. My savage had much trouble with them, but his unchanging passionless indifference did not desert him for a moment; he only seemed to work with his long stick with greater attention, without which on this day we should have been thrown out at least a hundred times, and left either in the middle of the wilderness or else by the woods which we were constantly skirting.

Suddenly one of the dogs stuck its muzzle

into the snow, twitched with its hind legs, and fell. My savage knew better than I did what this meant, and what new misfortune was threatening us, but he neither showed alarm nor agitation; now as always he planted his stick into the snow with a firm, steady hand, and gave me this anchor of safety to hold, while he quickly sprang out of the sledge, extracted the exhausted dog from its harness, and dragged it to the back of the sledge. I thought he was going to dispatch it and throw it away, but when I looked back I saw that this dog was also suspended from a tree with its body ripped open and its bloody intestines hanging out. It was a horrible sight.

"What's this again?" I shouted to him.

"It's for Shaytan, Bachka."

"Come, brother, that's enough for your Shaytan. It's too much for him to eat two dogs a day."

"Never mind, Bachka, let him grub."

"No, it's not 'never mind,'" I said. "But if you go on killing them at this rate, you will soon have killed them all for Shaytan."

"Bachka, I only give him those that die."

"You had better feed them."

"There's no food, Bachka."

"So!" This only proved what I had feared.

The short day was already sinking into evening, and it was evident that the remaining dogs were

quite exhausted; their strength was gone, and from time to time they began to gasp wildly and to sit down. Suddenly another fell, while all the rest, as if by agreement, sat down on their haunches and began to howl, as if they were celebrating a requiem for it.

My savage arose, and was about to hang up the third dog for Shaytan, but this time I strictly forbade it. I was so tired of seeing the ceremony, and this abomination seemed only to increase the horror of our situation.

"Stop!" I said, "don't touch it; let it die a natural death."

He did not dispute it, but with his usual imperturbable calmness, did the most unexpected thing. He silently stuck his long stick into the snow in front of our sledge, and began to unharness the dogs one after the other, and let them go free, The hungry animals seemed to forget their weariness; they whined, began to yelp and suddenly rushed off in a pack in the same direction, and in a moment they were lost to sight in the wood beyond the distant fallow land. All this happened so quickly that it reminded me of the story of "Il'ià Murometz": "All saw Il'ià mount his horse, but none saw him ride away." Our motive power had left us; we would have to walk. Of the ten dogs which so lately had been strong and

healthy, only one remained with us, and it lay at our feet in its harness dying.

My savage stood by with the same apathy, resting on his stick, and looking at his feet.

"Why did you do that?" I cried.

"I've let them go, Bachka."

"I see you have; but will they come back?"

"No, Bachka, they won't; they'll become wild."

"Why did you let them loose?"

"They want to grub, Bachka, let them catch an animal—they'll grub."

"But what shall we grub?"

"Nothing, Bachka."

"Ah! you monster!"

He evidently did not understand, and did not answer, but stuck his stick into the snow, and went away. Nobody would have guessed why he went away from me. I shouted after him, called him back, but he only gazed at me with his dull eyes and growled, "Hold your tongue, Bachka," and went further. He also soon disappeared in the skirts of the forest, and I remained quite alone.

Is it necessary for me to dwell on the terrible position in which I found myself, or perhaps you will better understand all its horrors, when I tell you I could think of nothing but that I was hungry, that I wanted to eat not in the human

sense of the wish for food, but to devour as a famished wolf would devour its prey. I took my watch out of my pocket, pressed the spring, and was staggered by a new surprise: my watch had stopped—a thing that had never happened before. With trembling hands I tried to wind it up, and convinced myself it had stopped only because it had run down; it could go for nearly two days. This proved to me that when we passed the night under the snow, we had lain for more than twenty-four hours in our icy grave! How long had it been? Perhaps twenty-four hours, perhaps thrice that time. I no longer was surprised that I was suffering so acutely from hunger. This proved that at the very least I had not eaten for three days, and when I realized it I felt the torments of hunger all the sharper.

If I could only eat—eat anything! a dirty, a nasty thing—only eat something! That was all I could understand, as I cast my eyes in unbearable suffering despairingly around me.

IX

WE were on a flat elevation, behind us lay an enormous limitless waste, before us its endless continuation, to the right a hollow filled with snow-drifts bounded by rising ground, while beyond, at a great distance, the blue line of the forest, into which our dogs had disappeared, showed dimly on the horizon. To the left stretched the skirts of another wood, along which we had driven until our team had been dispersed, and we ourselves were standing at the foot of a huge snowdrift, that had been blown over a small hillock covered with tall pines and firs, that seemed to reach to the sky. Sitting on the edge of the sledge, exhausted by hunger and numb with cold, I could not pay any attention to what was around me, nor did I notice when my savage appeared beside me. I neither saw how he approached, nor how he silently seated himself near me, and now at last when I noticed him he was sitting, with his long stick across his knees, and his hands hidden in the breast of his fur coat. Not a feature of his face had changed, not a muscle had moved, and his eyes had no expression beyond a dull calm submission.

I looked at him, but did not speak to him, and he as was his wont, never spoke first; this time he remained silent too. We understood each other, and we sat thus, side by side, through the endless dark night without exchanging a single word.

But as soon as the grey dawn began to show itself in the sky, the savage silently rose from the sledge, stuck his hands deeper into the bosom of his fur coat, and again began to wander about, and, constantly stopping, he would examine the trees long, very long, and then walk on At last he disappeared from my sight, and then in the same quick passionless way returned, and at once dived under the sledge and began to arrange or to disarrange something.

"What are you doing there?" I asked—and in speaking made the unpleasant discovery that my voice had become weak and had even quite changed its tone, while my savage spoke now as before, biting off his words jerkily.

"Getting my snow-shoes, Bachka."

"Snow-shoes!" I cried in horror, and it was now that I understood for the first time the meaning of "sharpening one's snow-shoes."* "Why are you getting your snow-shoes?"

"I shall run away at once."

"Ah, you villain!" I thought. "Where are you going?"

*A popular expression meaning: to take to one's heels.

"I shall run to the right, Bachka."

"Why will you run that way?"

"To bring you grub."

"You lie!" I said. "You want to desert me."

But without the slightest confusion he answered:

"No, I shall bring you grub."

"Where will you find grub?"

"Don't know, Bachka."

"You don't know then where you are running?"

"To the right."

"Who is there to the right?"

"Don't know, Bachka."

"If you don't know, why are you running away?"

"Have found a sign—there's a tent."

"You lie, my dear fellow," I said. "You want to leave me here alone."

"No, I will bring grub."

"Well, go, only it's better not to lie, go where you like."

"Why lie, Bachka, not good lie."

"It's not at all good, brother, but you are lying."

"No, Bachka, I don't lie; come with me. I show you sign."

He caught up the snow-shoes, and his stick, and

dragging them after him, took me by the hand, led me up to a certain tree, and asked :

" Bachka, do you see ? "

" What is there to see ? " I answered. " I see a tree and nothing more."

" But there on the large branch, twig on twig, do you see ? "

" Well, and what of that ? There is a twig, and probably the wind blew it there."

" No wind, Bachka ; it's not wind, but kind man put it there—on that side there's a tent."

It was very evident he was either deceiving me, or was himself deceived, but what was I to do ? I could not keep him by force from going and what would be the use of preventing him ? Was it not all the same to die from starvation and cold —alone, or for two to die together ? Let him run away and save himself if he could do so, and I said to him as the monks do : " Save thyself, brother."

He answered quietly : " Thank you, Bachka," and with these words fixed his snow-shoes firmly on his feet took his stick over his shoulder, scraped first with one foot and then with the other, and ran away. In a minute he was lost to sight, and I remained quite alone in the midst of snow and frost, and now quite exhausted by the acute cravings of hunger.

X

I PASSED the short Siberian day strolling about, near the sledge, now sitting down on it, then again rising, when the cold overcame the unbearable tortures of hunger. Of course, I only walked slowly, as I had not much strength left, and also because one sooner gets tired from rapid motion, and then one feels the cold more.

Wandering about near the spot where my savage had deserted me, several times I approached the tree on which he had pointed out the broken twig. I examined it carefully and was the more convinced that it was only a twig that had been torn from another tree, and blown there by the wind.

"He has cheated me," I said to myself. "He has cheated me, and it can't be counted as a sin. Why should he perish with me when it could do me no good."

Need I tell you how hard and terribly long the short winter day appeared to me? I did not believe in any possibility of salvation, and awaited death, but where was it? Why did it delay?

And when would it come? What tortures would I have to endure before it caressed me and soothed my sufferings? . . . Soon I began to observe that from time to time my sight failed me. Suddenly all the objects before me seemed to flow together and disappear into a kind of grey darkness, then suddenly and unexpectedly they would become clear again. . . . I thought this was caused simply by fatigue, but I do not know what part the changes of the light played in it; whenever the light changed slightly, things became visible again, and even very distinctly visible, and I could see very far and then again they became misty. The sun that showed itself for an hour behind the distant hillocks shed a wonderful pink light on the snow, that covered these mounds; this occurs before evening, then the sun suddenly disappears and the rose-coloured light changes to an exquisite blue. It was so now: everything near and around me turned blue, as if sprinkled with sapphire dust, wherever there was a rut, or the mark of a footstep, or even where a stick, had been stuck into the snow, a bluish mist curled in clouds, and after a short time this play of light was also extinguished: the wilderness, as if covered with an overturned bowl, became dark and then . . . . grew grey. With this last change, when the wonderful blue colour disappeared, and

momentary gloom spread over everything, the marvellous tricks of the wilderness began to show themselves, before my tired eyes, in the grey darkness. Every object assumed extraordinary and huge proportions and outlines: our little sledge looked like the hull of a ship, the frost-covered carcass of the dead dog looked like a sleeping white bear; while the trees appeared to have come to life and were moving about from place to place. . . . All this was so life-like and interesting, that notwithstanding my sad position, I would have been ready to examine it with curiosity if a strange occurrence had not frightened me away from my observations and awakened in me a new fear, arousing at the same time the instinct of self-preservation. I saw, in the twilight, something flitting in the distance, like a dark arrow, then another, and a third, and immediately after the air was filled with a long doleful howl.

In an instant I understood that it must be either wolves or our liberated dogs, who had probably found nothing to eat, not being able to catch any animal, and, quite exhausted by hunger, had remembered their dead friend, and wanted to profit by his body. In any case, if they were either famished dogs or wolves, they were not likely to give any quarter to my worshipful self, and although reason told me it would be better to be torn to

pieces in a moment, than to have to suffer the long agonies of hunger, the instinct of self-preservation took the upper hand and notwithstanding my heavy clothes, I was able to climb to the very top of the tree, with the agility and quickness of a squirrel, that, I must confess, I did not know I possessed, nor had ever dreamed of, and only stopped when I could go no higher. Below me an immensity of snow was spread out, and above me a dark sky like thin scum, on which out of the distant impenetrable gloom, the rayless stars shone with a reddish light. While I was casting my eyes around, down below, almost at the roots of my tree, a fierce fight took place. There were groans and howls, tearing and struggling, once more groans, and then silent flittings through the darkness in different dircetions, and again all was quiet, as if nothing had occurred. Such undisturbed silence succeeded that I could hear the beatings of the pulses in my body and my breathing appeared to make a noise like the rustling of hay, and when I breathed heavily, it was like an electric spark, that quietly crackled in the unbearably rarefied frosty air; it was so dry and cold, that even the hairs of my beard were frozen, and pricked like wire and broke to the touch. I even now feel a chill go through me at the remembrance, which my frost-bitten legs

help to keep alive ever since that time. It may have been a little warmer below, perhaps not, but in any case I was not sure, that the attack of the beasts of prey would not be repeated, and decided not to descend from the tree till morning. It was not more terrible than to be buried under the snow with my malodorous companion, and on the whole what could be more terrible than my present position? I just chose a widely spreading bough and sank down on it as in a fairly comfortable arm chair, in such a way that even if I had dozed, I should not have fallen off; but for greater security I put my arms firmly round a branch, and then stuck them deeper into the pockets of my fur coat. The position was well chosen and well constructed. I sat there like a frozen old owl, which I probably resembled in reality. My watch had long since stopped, but from my position I had an admirable view of Orion and the Pleiades—those heavenly clocks, by which I could now calculate the hours of my torture. I occupied myself with this: at first I calculated the exact time, and then I looked long, very long at these strange stars shining on a black sky, until they grew fainter, changed from gold to copper, and at last became quite dim and were extinguished.

The morning approached, equally grey and

joyless. My watch, that I had set by the position of the Pleiades, showed it was nine o'clock. My hunger increased and tormented me past all belief. I no longer felt the oppressive scent of viands, nor the recollection of the taste of tood. I only had a hungry pain. My empty stomach was dried up, twisted like a cord, and caused me the most unbearable sufferings.

Without any hope of finding something eatable, I climbed down the tree and began to wander about. At one place I picked up from the snow a fir cone. I thought at first it might be a cedar cone, and would contain nuts, but it proved to be a simple fir cone. I broke it, found a seed, which I swallowed, but the resinous smell was so unpleasant that my empty stomach refused to receive it, and my pains were only increased. At this time I noticed that all round our abandoned sledge there were numberless fresh tracks going in all directions, and that our dead dog had disappeared.

My corpse would evidently be the next to go, and the same wolves would prey on it and divide it among themselves in the same way. But when would it be? Was it possible in another day? It might even be more. No! I remembered one fanatical faster, who starved himself for the honour of Christ. He had the courage to note the days of his anguish and counted nine.

. . . How terrible ! But he fasted in the warmth, while I was exposed to the bitterest cold—of course that must make a difference. My strength had quite deserted me—I could no longer warm myself by motion, and sat down on the edge of the sledge. Even the consciousness of my fate seemed to abandon me. On my eyelids I felt the shadow of death, and was only troubled it was so long in leading me away to the path from which there was no returning. You must understand how earnestly I wished to depart from this frozen wilderness to the house of reunion of all mortals, and in no way regretted, that I would have to make my bed here in this frozen darkness. The chain of my thoughts was severed, the pitcher was broken, and the wheel had fallen into the well. Neither in my thoughts nor in the most ordinary form of words could I turn towards heaven. I was unable to draw comfort in any way, in any form. I realized this and sighed.

Our Father ! I cannot offer Thee, even penance for my sins, but Thou Thyself hast removed my light from its place. Thou wilt answer for me before Thyself.

This was the only prayer I was able to summon to my mind, after that I can remember nothing, nor how that day passed away. I can but affirm with certainty, it was the same as the previous one.

It only appeared to me, I saw during that day, somewhere far away from me, two living creatures, and they looked like some sort of birds; they seemed to be of the size of magpies and in appearance they resembled magpies, but with dirty rough feathers like owls. Just before sunset they flew down from the trees, walked about on the snow, and flew away again. But perhaps I only imagined this in my hallucinations before death; in any case it appeared to me so vividly, that I followed their flight with my eyes, and saw them disappear in the distance as if they had melted away. My tired eyes having reached this point, rested there and became fixed. But what do you think? Suddenly I began to notice in this direction a strange spot, that I think had not been there before. Then it seemed to move—though the movement was so imperceptible that it could only be distinguished by the inner sense rather than by the eyes, yet I was certain that it moved.

The hope of being saved stirred within me, and all my sufferings were not able to silence or stifle it. The spot continued to grow, and became more distinct, and was more clearly visible on that wonderful faintly pink background. Was it a mirage? —which was so likely in this desolate place, in such capricious light—or was it really something alive that was hurrying towards me? In any case it

was flying straight towards me, and it was really not walking but flying. At last I saw its outlines ; I could distinguish its figure ; I could see its legs—I saw how they stretched out one after the other . . . and immediately after I fell rapidly from joy into despair. Yes : this was no mirage—I saw it too clearly—but it was also no man, nor was it a wild beast. On the whole earth there was no creature made of flesh and blood, that resembled this enchanted, fantastic apparition, approaching towards me as if it were condensing, forming, or, as our modern spiritualists say—materializing out of the playful tints of the frozen air. Either my sight and my imagination were deceiving me, or could it be a spirit ? What spirit ? Who are you ?

Can it be Father Kiriak, hastening to meet me from the Kingdom of the dead ? . . . But perhaps we were both already there . . . is it possible I have already finished crossing the bar. . . . How wonderful ! How curious this spirit is, it is my co-inhabitant in this new life. I will describe him to you as well as I can : a gigantic winged figure floated towards me, clad from head to heels in a chiton of silver brocade, which sparkled all over ; on its head it had a head-dress that seemed to be seven feet high and glittered as if it were covered all over with diamonds, or, more precisely, as if it were a whole diamond mitre. . . . It was like a

richly ornamented Indian idol, and to complete this resemblance with an idol and its fantastic appearance, from under the feet of my wonderful visitor sparks of silver dust spurted out on all sides, and he seemed to float upon them as on a light cloud, looking at the very least like the legendary Hermes.

While I was examining him he—this wonderful spirit—came nearer and nearer and at last was quite close to me, a moment more and he had covered me with snow dust, stuck his fairy wand into the snow and exclaimed :

" How do you do, Bachka ? "

I could not believe either my eyes or my ears : this wonderful spirit was, of course, my savage. Now it was no longer possible to make a mistake : the same snow-shoes were under his feet, on which he had run away—on his back he had others ; before me, stuck in the snow, was his long staff, and in his arms there was a whole bear's ham, fur and all, with its paw and claws. But in what was he clad—how was he transfigured ?

Without waiting for any reply to his greeting, he thrust this bear's meat into my face and roared :

" Grub, Bachka," and he himself sat down on the snow and began to take off his snow-shoes.

XI

I FELL upon the bear's ham and began gnawing and sucking the raw flesh, trying to appease my torturing hunger, and at the same time looked at my deliverer.

What had he on his head that looked the whole time like a wonderful sparkling ornament—I was unable to make out what it was and asked him.

"What have you on your head?"

"That is because you did not give me any money," he answered.

I must admit I did not quite understand what he wanted to say, but continuing to look at him more attentively I discovered that his high diamond head gear was nothing more nor less than his own long hair. His hair was filled through and through with snowflakes, and had been blown about while he ran so that it had streamed out on all sides like wisps and become frozen.

"Where is your fur cap?"

"Thrown it away."

"Why?"

"Because you gave me no money."

"Well," I said, "I forgot to give you money; that was wrong of me, but what a cruel man that master must be, who would not trust you, and took away your cap in this frost."

"Nobody took away my cap."

"What happened then."

"I myself threw it down."

He told me that he had walked all day following the signs and had at last come to a hut; in the hut the carcass of a bear was lying, but the master was not there.

"Well?"

"I thought it would be long for you to wait, Bachka; you'd die."

"Well?"

"I cut off the bear's leg and ran back again, but I left him my cap."

"Why?"

"That he should not think badly, Bachka."

"But this master does not know you."

"This one does not know me, Bachka, but the Other knows me."

"What other?"

"That Master, Who looks from above."

"Hm! Who looks from above?"

"Yes, Bachka, of course, He sees everything, Bachka."

"He sees all, brother, He sees all."

"Of course, Bachka, He does not like those who do wrong, Bachka."

The reasoning was very much the same as that used by Saint Sirin, when seduced by a temptress, who tried to entice him into her house, but he invited her to sin with him before all the people in the market place, and she said: "We can't there, the people will see us," but he answered: "I don't pay much attention to the people, but what if God should see us? It is better we separate!"

"Well, brother," I thought, "you, too, are not walking far from the heavenly kingdom." During my short reflections he had fallen down in the snow.

"Good night, Bachka; you grub. I want to sleep."

And he began to snore in his own mighty fashion.

It was already dark: again the black sky was stretched over us, and on it again like sparks on pitch the rayless stars appeared.

By that time I began to revive, having swallowed a few small pieces of raw meat, and I stood with the bear's ham in my hands, looking at the sleeping savage, and thinking:

"What an enigma is the journey of this pure, exalted soul in such a clumsy body, and in this terrible wilderness? Why is he incarnated here and not in lands more blessed by nature? Why is his understanding so limited that he is unable to

have a broader and clearer conception of his Creator? Why, O God, is he deprived of the possibility of thanking Thee for enlightening him with Thy Holy Gospel? Why have not I the means in my hands to regenerate him with a new and solemn birth in Thy Son Christ? All this must be in accordance with Thy Will; if in his miserable condition Thou wishest to enlighten him with some divine light from above, then, I believe, that this enlightenment of his mind will be Thy gift. O Lord, how am I to understand it: let me not displease Thee by what I do; nor injure this Thy simple-hearted servant?"

Lost in these reflections, I did not notice the brightness that suddenly flamed up in the sky and bathed us in an enchanted light; again everything took on huge fantastic dimensions, and my sleeping savage appeared to me like a powerful enchanted fairy knight. I bent over him and began to examine him as if I had never seen him before, and what do you think?—he appeared to be beautiful. I imagined that this was he "in whose neck remained strength, he whose mortal foot never trod the path which no fowl knoweth, he before whom the horror fleeth," which had reduced me to impotence, and had caught me as in a noose, in my own projects. His speech is poor—therefore he cannot console a sorrowful heart with his lips,

but his words are as sparks from the beatings of his heart. How eloquent is his virtue, and who would consent to grieve him? Certainly not I. No, as the Lord liveth, Who has grieved my soul for His sake, I will not do it. May my shoulder fall off from my back, and my arm break off from the elbow, if I lift it against this poor man, and against his poor race. Pardon me, holy Augustin, even before I differed from thee, and now also I do not agree with thee that "even the virtues of the heathen are only hidden vices." No, this saviour of my life acted from no other impulse than virtue, the most self-denying compassion, and magnanimity: he, not knowing the Apostle Peter's words, "took courage for me, his enemy, and committed his soul to works of charity." He threw away his fur cap and ran a day and a night in that frozen head-gear, being moved, of course, not only by the natural feeling of sympathy for me, but having also "religio," prizing the reunion with that master "Who looks from above." What can I do for him now? Am I to take from him this religion and destroy it, when I lack the means of giving him another and a sweeter one, "as long as words confuse the reason of mortals," and it is impossible to show him works that could captivate him. Is it possible that I will force him by fear, or seduce him with

the benefits of security. He will never be like Hamor and Shechem, who let themselves be circumcized for the sake of Jacob's daughters and herds. Those who acquire faith for daughters and herds, acquire not faith, but only daughters and herds, and the offering from their hands will be for Thee like the blood of swine. But where are my means of educating, of enlightening him, when these means do not exist, and when it seems as if it had been decreed that they should not be in my hands ? No, my Kiriak, is right : a seal is here and the hand that is not liberated will not be able to break it, and I remembered the words of the prophet Habakkuk : " Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Come, Christ, come Thyself into this pure heart ; come to this simple soul for as long as Thou tarriest none can force it. . . . Let these snow-covered clods of His valleys be dear to him, and when his day comes let him cease to exist, let him cast off his life as a vine sheds its ripe fruit, as a wild olive tree sheds its blossoms. . . . It is not for me to put his feet in the stocks nor to track his footsteps, when He Who Is has written with His finger the law of love in his heart and has led him aside from evil paths. Our Father, show Thyself to him who loves Thee and does not tempt Thee, and

Thou shalt be praised for evermore as Thou hast always been praised, and through Thy mercy permit me and him and every one to fulfil Thy will, each as he can. There is no more confusion in my heart: I believe that Thou hast revealed Thyself to him as much as he requires it, and he knows Thee as all know Thee.

" Largior hic campos aether et lumene vestit
Purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt ! "

My memory recalled these words of Virgil—and bowing my head low beside my sleeping savage, I fell on my knees and blessed him, and covering his frozen head with the skirts of my cassock, I slept next to him, as I would have slept embracing the angel of the desert.

XII

SHALL I relate to you the end? It was not less wonderful than the beginning.

When we awoke the savage arranged the snow shoes he had brought under my feet, cut me a staff, placed it in my hands and taught me how to use it, then he bound a rope round me and taking the end in his hand drew me after him.

You ask whither? First of all, to pay our debt for the bear's meat. We hoped to find dogs there and to proceed further. But we did not go where my inexperienced plans had at first attracted me. In the smoky hut of our creditor another lesson awaited me, which had a most important influence on all my subsequent activity. The fact is, that the master for whom my savage had left his fur cap, had not been out shooting at the time that my deliverer had got there, but had been rescuing my friend Kiriak, whom he had found in the midst of the desert, abandoned by his Christian driver. Yes, gentlemen, here in this hut, lying near a dim stinking fire, I found

my honest old monk, and in what a terrible heart-rending condition! He had been quite frozen; he had been smeared with something and he was still alive, but the terrible stench that reached me when I approached him, told me that the soul that guarded this abode was leaving it. I raised the reindeer skin with which he was covered, and was horrified: gangrene had removed all the flesh from the bones of his legs, but he could still see and speak. Recognizing me, he whispered:

"Good day, Vladyko!"

With indescribable horror I looked at him, and could find no words.

"I was waiting for you, and now you have come. Thank God! You have seen the desert! What do you think of it? Never mind, you are alive, you have gained experience."

"Forgive me, Father Kiriak, for having brought you here"

"Enough, Vladyko! Your coming here will be blessed. You have gained experience, and can live. Shrive me quickly!"

"Very well," I said, "directly. Where have you placed the Holy Elements? Were they not with you?"

"They were with me," he announced, "but I have them no more."

"Where are they?"

"The savage ate them."

"What do you mean?"

"Yes, he ate them. . . . Well, what of it?" he said. "He is an ignorant man. . . . His His mind is confused. . . . I could not prevent him." "He said: 'I shall meet a priest—he will forgive me.' What is the use of speaking—his mind was quite confused."

"Surely he did not eat the Chrism?"

"He ate everything, even the sponge, and carried off the pyx and deserted me. . . . He believes that the priest will forgive him—what does it matter. His mind is confused. Let us forgive him, Vladyko—may Christ only forgive us. Promise me not to look for him—poor fellow—or, if you find him . . . ."

"To forgive him?"

"Yes, I ask it for Christ's sake . . . . and when you come home, see that you say nothing about it to the little enemies, or perhaps the cunning people will wreak their zeal on the poor fellow. Please do not tell them"

I gave him my word, and kneeling down near the dying man confessed him. At the same moment a gaily dressed sorceress rushed into the tent, which was now crowded with people, and began beating her tambourine; others followed her example, playing on wooden pitch-pipes and on

another incomprehensible instrument of the type used in ancient times when the various tribes and races fell prone on their faces to the sound of pipes and other sorts of music before the idol of the Valley of Death—and a barbarous ceremony began.

These prayers were for us, and for our deliverance, though it might perhaps have been better if they had prayed for their own deliverance from us; and I, a bishop, had to be present at these supplications, while Father Kiriak was giving up his spirit to God, and was not exactly praying, nor exactly expostulating with Him like the prophet Jeremiah, or communing with Him like a true evangelical swine-herd, not in words but in inarticulate sighs:

"Have pity," he whispered. "Take me now as one of your hired labourers. The hour has arrived . . . . restore me to my former likeness and inheritence . . . . do not let me be a wicked devil in hell—drown my sins in Christ's blood, send me to Him. . . . I want to lie at His feet. Say 'So be it.'"

He breathed heavily and continued:

"O goodness—O simplicity—O love—O my joy! Jesus . . . . I am running to Thee like Nicodemus through the night. . . . Turn towards me—open the door . . . let me hear God moving

and speaking. . . . Now Thy garment is already in my hands. . . . Thou mayest shatter my thigh . . . . but I will not release Thee . . . . before Thou dost bless everybody with me."

I love this Russian prayer, as in the twelfth century it poured from the lips of our Cyril Zlatoust* in Turov, and he bequeathed it to us. We must not only pray for ourselves, but for others, and not only for Christians but for the heathen, so that they too may be turned to God. My dear old Kiriak prayed in this way, he pleaded for all, and said: "Bless all or I will not release Thee." What can you do with such an old original?

With these words he stretched himself—as if he were clinging to Christ's garments—and flew away. It appears to me that he is still grasping and clinging to Him as He ascends, and still begging: "Bless all, or else I will not desist." The insolent old man will, perhaps, get his way; and He, from goodness, will at the last not refuse him. All this we do, treating Christ in a homely way, in sancta simplicitate. Whether we understand Him, or not, of that you may argue as you like, but that we live with Him quite simply I think cannot be denied. And he loves simplicity greatly.

*The Golden-mouthed.

XIII

I BURIED Kiriak under the clods of earth on the banks of a frozen river, and here it was that I learned from the savages the abominable news that my successful Zyryan baptized—I am ashamed to say it—simply by treating them to vodka. To my mind this whole business was a shameful one. I did not want to see this baptizer or hear anything more about him, but returned to the town firmly resolved to sit down in my monastery to my books, without which a monk, having idle thoughts, is utterly lost, and in the meantime I would quietly cut the hair of the ordinants, or settle the quarrels between the deacons and their wives. As for Holy Work, which, to be done in holiness cannot be done carelessly, it were better to leave it undone—so as not to offer foolishness to God.

I acted thus, and returned to the monastery, wiser for the experience, and knowing that my much suffering missionaries were good men, and I thanked God that they were so, and not different.

Now I saw clearly that good weakness is more pardonable than foolish zeal in a work where

there are no means of applying intelligent zeal. That this is impossible was proved to me by a paper, I found waiting for me at the monastery, in which I was requested "to take note" that in Siberia besides the 580 Buddhist lamas, who were on the staffs of thirty four temples, a number of supernumerary lamas were permitted. What of that? I was not a Kanyushkevich or an Arseni Matsievich—I was a bishop of the new school and did not want to sit in Reval with a gag in my mouth, as Arseni sat; there was no profit in that. I "took note" of the information concerning the increase of the lamas, ordered my Zyryan to return from the desert as soon as possible, and conferring on him an epigonation—the spiritual sword—kept him in the town attached to the cathedral in the capacity of sacristan and superviser of the re-gilding of the iconostasis, but I called my own lazy missionaries together and bowing down to their girdles said:

"Pardon me, fathers and brothers, that I did not understand your goodness."

They answered, "God will forgive."

"I thank you for your graciousness; be gracious from now always and everywhere, and the God of Mercy will prosper your works."

From that time, during the remainder of my prolonged stay in Siberia, I never troubled if the

quiet labours of my missionaries did not produce the spectacular results so well loved by the impatient members of fashionable religious society. While there were no such sudden effects I felt assured that the water jars were being filled one after another, but when it chanced that one or other of my missionaries produced a large number of proselytes . . . . I must confess, I was troubled. . . . . I remembered my Zyryan, or the baptizer of the Guards Ushakov, or the Councillor Yartzev, who were still more successful because in their case as in the days of Vladimir, "piety was allied to fear," and even before the arrival of these missionaries the natives begged to be baptized. Yes, but what was the result of all their nimbleness and piety allied with fear? The abomination of desolation was produced in the holy places, where these fleet baptizers had their fonts and . . . . all was confusion—in the mind, in the heart, in the understanding of the people, and I, a bad bishop, could do nothing for it, and a good bishop could not have done more before—before, so to speak, we begin seriously to occupy ourselves with faith, and not merely take pride in it for pleasure's sake like Pharisees. That, gentlemen, is the position in which we Russian baptizers find ourselves; not, as it may appear, because we do not understand Christ, but because we really

understand Him and do not want His name to be blasphemed by the heathen. So I lived on, not showing tyranny with the same readiness as before, but patiently, one may almost say, lazily, stumbling under the crosses sent down to me both by Christ and not by Christ, of which the most remarkable one was that I, who began to study Buddhism with zeal, was sedulously reported by my Zyryan to be myself secretly a Buddhist. And this reputation clung to me, although I did not restrain the zeal of my Zyryan and allowed him to act according to the well tested and successful methods of Prince Andrei Bogolyubsky, which were thus proclaimed over his grave by his follower Kus'ma: "If a heathen comes, order him to be taken to the sacristy—let him look upon our true Christianity. And I allowed the Zyryan to take anybody he chose to the sacristy and display to them with care all that our people and he had collected there of "true Christianity." All this was good and fairly efficacious: they praised our "true Christianity," but no doubt my Zyryan found it was dull to baptize only two or three at a time—and it certainly was "dull." Here we have a real Russian expression. Yes, gentlemen, it was dull then to struggle against the self-satisfied ignorance that tolerated the Faith only as a political means. But now, perhaps,

it is even duller to struggle against the indifference of those who instead of enlightening others have as that same Matsievich very happily expressed it, "themselves hardly any faith." Well, I suppose, you clever modern men think: "Oh! our diocesan bishops are bad! What do they do? Our bishops do nothing! Now, I do not want to defend them all; many of us have certainly become very feeble; they stumble under the crosses and fall; and not only do influential personages, but even some "popa mitratus" become authorities for them, and all this is of course, because of "What will ye give me?" Well, supposing I were to ask you: What has brought them to this? Is it not really because they, your diocesan bishops, have been converted into administrators and are unable to do anything vital now? And mark: Perhaps you owe them much gratitude for doing nothing in these times. Otherwise they might have strapped with the official thong such an unbearable load on your back, that God knows, if your back bone would not have been shattered to splinters, or the thong have been torn in two; but we are conservatives, and defend liberty as well as we can; liberty, may Christ free us thereby from such co-operation. Gentlemen, that is why we act and co-operate weakly. Do not throw up at us the former hierarchies, such

as those of St. Guri and others. It is true St. Guri knew how to enlighten, but for that purpose he went into savage lands well armed with orders and powers to "attract the people with caresses, with food, with defences from the authorities, with support against the Voevods and the judges;" he was obliged to take part in the councils of the government, but your bishop of to-day is not even allowed to take counsel with a neighbouring bishop about the business of his diocese; in a word, he must think of nothing. There is somebody who thinks for him. All he has to do is to "take note of" what is ordered. What do you require of him, when now he can never act for himself? Lord, Thy will be done . . . What can be done is somehow done by itself. This I saw towards the end of my stay in Siberia. One day a missionary came to me and said that he had come upon a camp of a nomad tribe at the spot where I had buried my old Kiriak, and there on the banks of the stream, he had baptized whole crowds in the name of Kiriak's God, as formerly a man had been baptized in the name of Justinian's God. Near the bones of the good old Monk the good people learned to love and understand God, who had created this pious soul, and they themselves wished to serve the God who had brought into existence such spiritual beauty.

In consequence of this I ordered such a large solid oaken cross to be placed over Kiriak's grave that even the Galician prince Vladimirko, who thought it unworthy to kiss small crosses, would not have been able to resist it; so we erected to Kiriak a cross that was twice the size of the Zyryan —and this was the last order I gave in my Siberian pastorate.

I do not know who will cut down this cross or who has already cut it down—whether it was the Buddhist lamas or the Russian officials—besides, what does it matter?

Now my tale is finished. Judge us all from what you see—I will not try to justify myself, but I will only say this: My simple Kiriak certainly understood Christ not less well than your foreign preachers, who jingle like a tinkling cymbal in your drawing-rooms and winter-gardens. Let them preach there surrounded by the wives of Lot, who, whatever words they may hear, will none of them go to Zoar, but, after shuffling about before God, while existence is dull for them, at the least change in their lives will look back at their Sodom and become columns of salt. This will be the only result of this drawing-room Christianity. What have we to do with these miracle workers? They do not want to walk on the earth, but desire to fly in the sky, and having

but small wings and a large body like grasshoppers, they cannot fly far, nor can they pour the light of faith or the sweets of consolation into the fogs of our native land, where, from wooded dale to wooded dale, our Christ wanders, so blessed, so kind, and above all so patient, that He has taught even the worst of His servants to look submissively on the destruction of His work by those who ought to fear it most We have become used to submit to everything, because this is not the first snow to fall on our heads. There was a time when "Our Book of Faith" was hidden, and a hammer of German workmanship was placed in our hands; they wanted to cut our hair, shave us and transform us into little abbés. One benefactor, Golitzin, ordered us to preach his crazy divinity; another, Protasov, shook his finger under our very noses; while a third, Chebyshev, excelled all the others and openly uttered "corrupt words" in the market place as well as in the Synod, affirming that there is no God, and to talk of Him is stupid. It is impossible to guess whom we shall meet next, and how some new cock or other may yet crow to us. The one consolation is that all these zealots of the Russian Church will not injure her, because theirs is an unequal struggle: the Church is indestructible like the apostolic edifice; the spirit will pass from these singers,

and their place shall know them no more. But, gentlemen, what I think, especially tactless—is that some of these highly placed or broad-minded personages, as it is now the fashion to call them, do not notice our modesty, nor do they value it. Verily, this is ingratitude; they have no right to reproach us with being patient and quiet. . . . If we were more impatient, God knows, many would not be sorry for it, more especially those who do not consider work, nor admit of man's wounds, but having waxed fat, reason idly as to what they ought to begin to believe, in order to have something to reason about. Gentlemen, reverence at least the holy modesty of the Orthodox Church, and understand that she has truly maintained the spirit of Christ, if she suffers all that God wills her to suffer. Truly her humility is worthy of praise; and we must wonder at her vitality and bless God for it.

We all involuntarily answered:

"Amen."

THE END.